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Official Report

Bengal Legislative Assembly

Fifteenth Session, 1943

The 10th to 13th, 15th to 18th, 22nd to 27th and 29th March, 1943

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GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency Sir JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E.

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

(1) The Hon'ble Mr. ABUL KASEM FAZUL HUQ, in charge of the Finance, Home and Publicity Departments.

(2) The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca, in charge of the Departments of Industries, Commerce and Labour.

(3) The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU, in charge of the Department of Public Health and Local Self-Government.

(4) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM, in charge of the Education Department.

(5) The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE, in charge of the Revenue Department and of the Judicial and Legislative Departments.

(6) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN, in charge of the Agriculture, Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Departments.

(7) The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED, in charge of the Department of Communications and Works.

(8) The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN, in charge of the Forests and Excise Department.

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEAKER.

The Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY, Esq.

SECRETARY.

K. ALI AFZAL, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS

Official Report of the Fifteenth Session.

Volume LXIV—No. 3.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 10th March, 1943, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYID NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 210 members.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the sanction of the House, I propose to take up questions up to 5-15 when I propose to adjourn the House for prayer. After that the debate on the Food Resolution will commence.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we then know how long the food debate will continue, because you were pleased to assure us that you will give us three solid hours for debate on food?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Hon'ble Chief Minister was agreeable to that. I do not know whether it is three solid hours, but I remember that he agreed to give you three hours.

(Starred question No. 13 was then called.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I remind you, Sir, that your deputy predecessor in the Chair gave us an assurance that when questions and answers relating to the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca came to be taken up, they would be freshly circulated on the date on which he would give answer?

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that has been done.

STARRED QUESTION

(to which oral answer was given)

Supply of certain essential commodities in Chittagong.

***13. Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether any steps have been taken by the Government for the supply of (1) rice, (2) salt, (3) sugar and (4) kerosene, in the district of Chittagong; and

(*ii*) what amount of those articles was taken out of the district since the 1st of April, 1942?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any measures have been taken to check the rise in the price of the abovementioned commodities?

(*c*) If so, what?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*a*) (*ii*) No figures are available.

(*c*) A Price Control Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, in which both dealers' and consumers' interests are represented, is functioning very satisfactorily. Prices are fixed by the District Magistrate generally on the recommendation of this Committee and it draws up its recommendation after taking into consideration all factors that operate in deciding the price level of a particular commodity.

So far as common rice is concerned the stock of rice and paddy is sufficient for the present needs of the district and supply from outside in any large quantity has not yet been necessary.

Attempts at surreptitious removal of essential commodities with a view to profiteering were stopped by placing temporary restrictions on booking of these goods by rail. That ban has now been withdrawn under Government orders.

When profiteers attempted to create an artificial shortage by withholding stocks from sale, as had happened in the case of rice and salt, certain big stocks were requisitioned under the Defence of India Rules and were made available to the public at controlled prices.

Figures obtained from railway stations showed that a lot of sugar was coming into the district from "black markets" operating outside Chittagong but dealers were forcing up the price by creating an artificial shortage. An order has therefore been passed controlling the delivery of sugar consignments and their subsequent disposal. Results so far obtained have been satisfactory and though certain dealers are very sore at being prevented from profiteering it has been possible for the man in the street to get a small ration of sugar at controlled rate. No controlled import of sugar has taken place from May to September but one thousand maunds were requisitioned by the Department and allotted to the district in October. The districts are now getting fixed quotas direct from the factories. This system was inaugurated in December last. The quota allotted to this district for December-March is 7,535 bags and the Harinagar factory was asked to supply to it. But the factory has, on some excuse or other, declined to do so and the Sugar Controller for India has been requested to intervene: meantime another factory has been asked to despatch 3,000 bags to Chittagong immediately. The factory has agreed to do so as soon as it can secure the necessary wagons.

Regarding salt, arrangements are being made with the Central Excise and Salt Department to open two bonded warehouses—one at Cox's Bazar and the other at Chittagong—to enable salt from the Coastal belt to flow easily into the interior markets. Local manufacturers are also being encouraged to form themselves into associations and to start licensed factories so that arrangements may be made for excising the salt at the place of manufacture. This will mean greater supply and consequent lowering of price. The District Magistrate controls existing stocks of imported salt, the price of which is lower than elsewhere.

So far as kerosene is concerned, the supply for the district has been reduced by 50 per cent. of the pre-war standard by the B.O.C. This has resulted in inevitable hardships and an agreement has been reached with the company by which fairer and more equitable distribution will be possible. Villagers are also being encouraged to use castor oil and *garjan* oil as substitute illuminants.

Shortly after the air-raids in May last a Civil Defence Store was opened in the town, after most of the shops had closed down, principally to meet the needs of the remaining population during the emergency. It sells essential articles at controlled rates. Though most of the shops have opened by now the Civil Defence Store is still functioning because it serves as an efficient check on the profiteering propensities of some dishonest shopkeepers. A number of relief stores opened subsequently and run by local committees or private individuals have done a great deal in providing essential commodities at controlled prices to the poorer sections of the community.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the sources of information upon which he says that "So far as common rice is concerned the stock of rice and paddy is sufficient for the present needs of the district"?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Local authorities.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: What are the sources of information upon which the local authorities gave the information—whether they took any census of the stock or not?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I could not say, but my information is from the local authorities.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the recommendation of the Advisory Committee has been accepted by the district authorities?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As far as I understand, the local officers in collaboration with the district authorities have followed as far as possible the advice of the local committees.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that wherever the controlling authorities control the price of any commodity, the price automatically goes up?

SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: The Hon'ble Minister has been pleased to state that he is encouraging the people of this province to use castor oil and other oil in place of kerosene oil. Does he propose, Sir, in view of the shortage of wheat that this province is experiencing, to ask the people of Bengal to eat cakes instead of bread?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that question arises.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the Price Control Advisory Committee, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of the members thereof and the name of the Chairman?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I cannot give the answer offhand. If the honourable member wants, I can take it as a notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when this information was taken from the local authorities? I refer to answer (*c*) where it is stated that the stock of common rice is sufficient for the district.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: As regards date I want notice.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the stock in the district and the amount necessary for the consumption of the district?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: How does the question arise?

Mr. SPEAKER: You have given a complete catalogue of the story as to how you are controlling the prices and you have said that in some places the present stock is sufficient, and, therefore, that question does arise.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The question has been answered here. No figures are available now.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to the answer that that ban has now been withdrawn under Government orders, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were the reasons for the withdrawal of the orders by the Government?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Probably normal flow was established and therefore Government thought that the ban should be withdrawn.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the basis of his conclusion that the stock was sufficient when the figures were not available to him?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is more or less argumentative.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, my question is, what is the basis of his conclusion, because on the one hand he says that the stock is sufficient and on the other hand he says that he has no figures at his disposal. Then he must have something in his mind to come to that conclusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is an argumentative question. He has said that he has based his opinion on the reports received from the local authorities. Therefore that question does not arise.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: With reference to paragraph 3 of answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what step Government have taken to stop the removal of commodities by boat?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice to answer that question.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that recently ration card system has been introduced in Chittagong?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Probably it is correct.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: With regard to the answer relating to kerosene oil, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us for how long the letter of the Burma Oil Company setting out its fresh proposal for distribution will remain unanswered in his department?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be able to contradict me if I say that for six months the letter remained unanswered in spite of four reminders sent by that Company?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Unless I can procure the information, I cannot contradict the statement of the honourable member.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Has the Hon'ble Minister got any recent information regarding the new arrangements that have been put into operation? Has he asked the District Officers to send reports regarding the working of the arrangements?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I did not ask. Since the honourable member has suggested I will ask the District Officers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to salt for Chittagong mentioned in paragraph 3 on page 2 of the answer, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any attempt has been made other than that mentioned in that paragraph to improve the supply of salt for the area; and will he be pleased to state also if he is aware that the price fixed for salt in Chittagong is much lower than the price available in the adjoining districts of Noakhali and Comilla as a result whereof salt is not being taken to Chittagong?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: What is the question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The first part of my question is that apart from the question of making arrangements for the coastal belt salt coming to Cox's Bazar and the other depôts, has Government made any other arrangement to import salt from Calcutta or elsewhere; and whether he is aware that salt is not being imported, because the price fixed for Chittagong is much lower than the price prevailing in the adjoining districts of Noakhali and Comilla?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: It may be that on account of the lower price salt is not being taken there.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that owing to short and restricted supply of rice in the rural areas, the price of rice has risen to an abnormally high level; and if so, will he be pleased to state whether Government have taken any step to make immediate arrangements for an adequate supply of rice in the rural areas?

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, Mr. Biswas; this question refers to Chittagong alone and you can ask questions regarding Chittagong only.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: If the question refers to Chittagong, my question refers to Chittagong and if it relates to the whole of Bengal, my question also relates to the whole of Bengal. Sir, I put it that my question refers to Chittagong.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: When the question was answered the supply of rice to Chittagong was adequate, but since then probably many other changes might have taken place——

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Sir, that is not the full answer. The Hon'ble Minister says "may be, may be"——

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I have not finished my answer.

If there is scarcity anywhere, Government will do their best to see that supply is going to the deficit districts.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give us some instances of cases where there is scarcity and where he is taking steps to remove crops from surplus area to that area?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise out of this question because it is limited to Chittagong only.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that at the present time the price of rice or paddy is gradually going higher and higher?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Yes, I am aware of the fact that the price of rice has gone up.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in how many cases Government took action for surreptitious removal of goods?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has just now replied that he is taking steps to remove high prices of rice in Chittagong. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what practical steps he has taken up till now to remove high prices of rice in Chittagong?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, I have never stated that. What I have stated is that if information comes that there is scarcity in Chittagong Government will see that scarcity is removed.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Are we to understand that no steps up till now have been taken for the removal of scarcity in Chittagong?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: I am not aware that there is scarcity in Chittagong. If I am informed, I will take steps.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With reference to the answer to my former question, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether those villagers who were forced to evacuate from their villages near about Chittagong and the evacuees from Burma in the Chittagong area are deprived of getting ration cards?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The question of evacuation does not come within the purview of my department.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the point is about ration cards.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: To answer that I want notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that certain dealers were very sore for being prevented from profiteering and from which it appears that Government could locate those dealers, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government took against those persons who profiteered?

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: To answer that I want notice.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any member of the Progressive Coalition Party belonging to Chittagong brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister the fact about the acute food scarcity in Chittagong?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of order, Sir. Does the question arise whether any member of this side of the House brought it to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is whether any member of this House belonging to the Progressive Coalition Party brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister about the scarcity in Chittagong. I think that is a relevant question.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY : চট্টগ্রাম সম্বন্ধে এ পর্য্যন্ত যা কিছু করা হ'য়েছে সবই আমাদের পার্টি থেকে হ'য়েছে।

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The question on which supplementaries are being put is in itself an answer that members of the Coalition Party have brought to the notice of the Government that there is scarcity in Chittagong.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

SPECIAL MOTION.

Supply and distribution of foodstuffs, coal, kerosine oil and cloth.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Before presenting my statement, Sir, as to the measures that I have taken for solving this problem, I do freely admit that I ought to have made this statement at the beginning and the debate should have been initiated on that, for which I am very sorry.

Sir, the subject of food supplies and food prices is not only the most burning problem of the day, but one that touches every man and woman in this country most vitally at every stage in the ordinary businesses of his or her life. The current interest in this problem is therefore easily understandable, and I am grateful to my honourable friends for the valuable comments and suggestions that they have made in course of the debate on this subject. If I cannot reply adequately to all their criticisms, this will be not on account of the fact that I have overlooked or ignored any of them, but because of the very limited time at my disposal and the complexities of the problem, which preclude an exhaustive treatment of the subject within the time allotted to me. The best that I can do is to touch only on a few important aspects of the problem and of our efforts to attack it in the past few months.

But before I proceed further, I will beg of my honourable friends to remember the circumstances in which I took over charge of the portfolio of Commerce and Labour in the late summer of 1942 and the situation as regards supplies and prices that prevailed at that time. If the honourable members would turn back to the year that is no more, they will remember that till about February-March, 1942, the food problem had acquired none of its urgency. It was only after the Japanese invasion of Burma and the fall of Rangoon that the problem took a really serious turn. For the first time since the outbreak of the war in September, 1939, prices showed a marked and continuing tendency to rise and supplies of some of the essential commodities began to be increasingly scarce. The Provincial Government possess no adequate organisation to cope with the problem with which they were suddenly confronted, with the result that between March and July, 1942, the efforts of the department had perforce to be confined to price control simpliciter, *i.e.*, to the efforts to control the prices of essential consumption commodities without any attempt to control their supplies from the source. It was however soon evident that the problem which Government would have to tackle before long was not merely one of retail profiteering, but the very much larger and complicated problem of the organisation of supplies and the mobilisation of our available food resources. This aspect of the problem was uppermost in my mind from the time that I first took over the Commerce and Labour Department in a temporary capacity in June, 1942, but it was not till I had permanently taken over this portfolio that I succeeded in reorganising the department on a very much broader basis.

It will not be out of place in this connection to refer to one item of our policy, which left its permanent impress on the food problem in this province even after the emergency which had occasioned this policy had disappeared. I refer to the denial policy in respect of the movement of rice and paddy from some of our surplus riverain districts. This policy which we had to adopt for overriding military reasons could not but affect the channels of trade in grain from some of our most important surplus districts to the consuming centres, and by the physiological reactions which they set up gravely dislocated the economic life of not merely these districts——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of order, Sir. Was that a physiological reaction or psychological reaction?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. (A VOICE FROM THE TREASURY BENCH: That is a point of mental disorder.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, we want to know whether Mr. Pinnell who has prepared the statement is wrong or whether the Hon'ble Minister is wrong?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it is proper for you, Mr. Suhrawardy, to ask whether what Mr. Pinnell has stated is wrong. I may tell you that

this is a statement made by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department. It may be that he has mispronounced the word, but you have got to take it as a statement made by the Hon'ble Minister himself.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The point of order is that hitherto whenever any written speech was read out it was submitted that either the Hon'ble Minister who spoke out from the written speech took responsibility for the speech himself and let the House have the impression that it was his speech, but if a member reads out a speech with obvious mistakes like "George the V" (pronouncing V as "Bhee") then it is difficult to take it as his speech and therefore the point of order comes, and you will permit that.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is for you to draw your own inference, Dr. Sanyal. It is not for me to give any ruling on that point.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: This was one of the hard realities of the war, which had then cast its darkening shadow over this fair province, that we had to face. Fortunately, for us today, that shadow had disappeared, but I would ask my honourable friends to remember that the consequences of the policy which the necessities of those times forced us to adopt about a year ago are still with us, and when they criticised Government's rice policy in 1942, they should not forget the implications of the denial policy of an earlier period. While I am on this subject of denial policy, I would like to dispel certain common misapprehensions to which currency has been given in the past as well as in course of this debate by some of my honourable friends. I regret that in the last session of the Assembly for reasons of security I could not disclose the relevant information in this subject that I am now in a position to give to the honourable members. We purchased last year with Government of India funds about 4¾ lakhs of maunds of rice and 5¼ lakhs of maunds of paddy. It is entirely incorrect to say that the bulk of it was exported outside Bengal or sold to the Army. We had the satisfaction that over 90 per cent. of these denial stocks were used for the sole benefit of the population of this province. The other common allegation that the denial stocks were all used for the benefit of Calcutta and the industrial areas is equally without any foundation in fact. Barely 23 per cent. of the total stocks were so used, while a much larger percentage was used for Eastern Bengal districts, and the relief of cyclone-stricken people in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. Whatever views the honourable members may entertain about the genesis or the operation of the denial policy, I have no doubt in my mind that they will agree with me that the disposal of the denial stocks was carried out in a manner calculated to further the best interests of the province as a whole.

As I have already stated, the establishment of the Directorate of Civil Supplies marked the recognition of the fundamental fact—that it was futile to try and control prices without prior control over supplies at the source. But it was several months before the Directorate could begin to

function properly. It was not easy to provide the necessary staff either at headquarters or in the districts. For about five months the higher personnel of the Directorate consisted of a Director and a Deputy Director assisted by a Controller of Supplies for the Calcutta area. Equally unavoidable delay took place in providing the necessary subordinate and clerical assistance. It always takes time to build up an efficient administrative organisation, and in face of the present competitive demand for man-power, the recruitment of the right type of experienced personnel for such a complicated quasi-commercial undertaking was no easy task. My esteemed friend, Mr. Hendry, enquired if any attempts had been made by Government to look for suitable trained personnel from commercial circles, it would have been easy enough for me to answer this query with a simple "yes", for we *did* try to obtain suitable assistants from all the leading Chambers of Commerce, but failed to get them.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. I understand that Dr. Sanyal uttered the word "lie" which is unparliamentary.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But I submit, Sir, an untrue statement is called a "lie".

Mr. SPEAKER: But I think the word "lie" ought not to be uttered in a parliament.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In that case, Sir, I substitute the words "an untrue statement" for the word "lie".

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The issues involved are, however, much wider. I can visualise commercial assistance in our efforts in two principal directions—first, in the formulation of policies, and, secondly, in the technical administration of schemes. For the first purpose, commercial assistance can be availed of only in an advisory capacity; for final executive decisions in matters of policy must remain the ultimate responsibility of Government. The Directorate of Civil Supplies have always endeavoured to obtain technical advice in the formulation of schemes through the various trade committees associated with them. More continuous help could no doubt be obtained; but, in my judgment, it is in the field of technical administration that commercial assistance is most needed. Unfortunately the conditions of service under Government seldom attract the right type of commercial personnel to it, with the result that we have so far found it exceedingly difficult to obtain the services of suitable technical assistants from the trade. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the trade's offer of help and co-operation, and I shall pass on this offer to the Directorate of Civil Supplies without delay.

Quite apart from this serious organizational difficulty, another factor that greatly hampered the efficient functioning of the Civil Supplies Directorate was the recurring emergencies that occurred throughout this period. The Directorate of Civil Supplies were almost continually engaged in meeting

one emergent situation after another—sometimes relating to rice, sometimes to salt, sometimes to sugar and sometimes to coal—with the result that they had hardly the time or the opportunity to formulate a complete and coherent scheme of work till very late in the year 1942, when the air raids over Calcutta introduced a completely new set of problems. I do not like to take the time of my honourable friends by a detailed chronological recitation of the main events that occurred between August, 1942, and February, 1943, but would merely refer to one or two of the more disturbing factors to illustrate what I have just said.

Immediately after the Directorate was established, the widespread political disturbances that took place in the wake of the Congress session at Bombay seriously affected the supplies of some of the essential consumption commodities from Bihar and the United Provinces. For example, serious deterioration in the sugar position at this time was the direct consequence of the dislocation of transport in North Bihar. Emergent action had to be taken to cope with this situation and the result was the 25 per cent. levy on all imports of sugar, the establishment of a chain of retail shops, and a necessarily cautious policy in respect of sugar dealers. Before the situation had stabilized a little, came the cyclone in Midnapore and 24-Parganas, which set in motion a series of forces that ultimately sent rice prices rocketting about the middle of December. Emergent action had to be taken to deal with this unexpected situation, and that kept the Directorate occupied for the best part of November and December, 1942. I could mention many other similar happenings that diverted the attention and energy of the Directorate of Civil Supplies from the fundamental problems that clamoured for solution, but that could not be attacked till these recurring emergencies had been overcome. But time forbids further elaboration of my argument.

I would now beg of my hon'ble friends to follow me to an entirely different train of thought. I would ask them to visualize the circumstances in which provincial policy as regards supplies and prices must function in this province. Broadly speaking, apart from rice and kerosene, this province must depend for the bulk of its supplies of other essential consumption commodities on imports from other provinces I need not give details. The hon'ble members are well aware of the basic weaknesses of our provincial economy. For salt, wheat, sugar, *dal*, mustard oil, *ghee* and some other minor articles of consumption we are almost entirely dependent on the other provinces. Our economy can be maintained in stable equilibrium only if the other provinces play the game with us. In the absence of such inter-provincial co-operation, the organisation of supplies in this province becomes an almost impossible task unless the Central Government takes a hand in the matter. One of the most important handicaps from which the Directorate of Civil Supplies has suffered in the past has been this lack of Central control and direction. As a result of prolonged negotiation, argument and persuasion the Government of India have only recently agreed to exercise effective control over supplies and their movements from province to province, and thus to lay the foundation for an orderly and scientific system of provincial control.

Earlier in my speech, I stated that the policy of the Directorate was to establish effective control over supplies at the source. Such control has been recently established effectively in the case of sugar, coal and wheat, with the active assistance of the Central Government; consequently, it has been possible for the Directorate to draw up a workable scheme of distribution for these commodities. The recent dislocation in the coal position was due primarily to transport—another Central subject. Happily, the situation has been brought down to normal. In the case of wheat, the province's control over supplies has been established only for about a month now, and it is only lately that regular supplies have begun to come in from the Punjab. Unless any serious upheaval takes place in the near future I foresee an increasingly easy position as regards the supplies of these commodities.

In the case of kerosene, control over supplies at the source has been obtained through the co-operation of the oil companies, whose headquarters are situated within the boundaries of this province. But, unlike sugar, wheat or coal, the control of the Provincial Government over distribution of kerosene is still partial; but before long we expect to exercise full control in collaboration with the oil companies.

Cloth is one important commodity in which our control over supplies is, unfortunately, still very incomplete. In this matter as in others our difficulties arose mainly from the uncertainties of Central Government policy. In the summer of 1942 the Government of India formulated a scheme for the manufacture of *dhoties, saries* and shirtings of standardised specifications at a low price. Between one thing and another, that scheme never materialised. It is however only fair to add that the responsibility for this infructuousness of Central policy was due not merely to the fault of the Centre but also to dilatoriness on the part of several provincial authorities, including ourselves. This was inevitable in the early stages of our organisation, when the office of the Chief Controller of Prices was so inadequately manned that it could hardly cope with the work that it was expected to handle. But the honourable members will be interested to know that firm orders have been now placed for several lakhs of yards of standard cloth for this province and the first instalment of thirty lakhs of yards is already overdue. Schemes of distribution have been kept ready and as soon as the cloth is available, steps will be taken to make it available to the poorer sections of the public. I would, however, warn the honourable members that the arrival of our consignments of standard cloth will not solve all our problems of clothing our people. Unless the production of these varieties of cloth is very considerably increased, no substantial improvement in the position can be expected. The solution of this problem lies essentially in increased all-round production.

I would not take up any more of the time of my honourable friends by dilating on the problems of individual commodities. I feel sure that they will recognise that our policy of control over supplies at the source, and their distribution through approved channels under our partial or complete control, has brought about a substantial measure of improvement in respect of most of the imported commodities. It would be foolish to claim that

our system of distribution is efficient. I am aware of its many defects and deficiencies, but I would impress on the honourable members one fact which is apt to be forgotten, that the existing system of distribution of these commodities grew up out of emergent conditions. Pending the formulation of a comprehensive scheme of distribution by the Distributing Trades Tribunal, which as the honourable members are aware, has been just set up, we have to work our way through the existing channels of distribution. The Distributing Trades Tribunal has already set to work, and I hope and trust that it will succeed in evolving a system of distribution both in Calcutta and the districts that will not only prove to be efficient but will also be acceptable to the trade and the public as a whole. There is a special reason why I am most anxious that this Tribunal should conclude its deliberations as early as possible. It is only after an efficient system of distribution has been established not only in Calcutta but all over the province that we can enforce fair dealing and honest trading by rigorous prosecution, if necessary. The leader of the European Group commented the other day on Government's inability to deal firmly with speculators, profiteers and the practitioners in the black markets. Unless we were to convert the Directorate of Civil Supplies into a vast police organisation, it was impossible for us in the early days, in the absence of any controlled distributive system, to embark on a policy of widespread criminal prosecutions. For the sake of maintaining continuity of essential supplies, it was necessary in these earlier days to temporise, for the time being, with anti-social forces; but that stage is now happily over, and with increased control over the supplies of some of the commodities, the Directorate of Civil Supplies will come more and more into its own and will be increasingly able to enforce its will on the organisation of the trade. We must, however, be on our guard to distinguish between economic forces and anti-social activities. For while we must strike hard and unflinchingly at the latter, we must have patience and understanding to analyse and appraise the former.

While on this subject of distribution, I will take the leave of my honourable friends to say a few passing words about the system of distribution in the city. Along with them, I have long felt the utter inadequacy of the method of distribution through a number of controlled shops. These shops, as I pointed out a little while ago, originated in special emergencies. They came into being for one thing, but have existed for another. In the absence of sufficient control over supplies, it has so long been impossible to consider any better system of distribution than a combination of *ad hoc* supplies to priority consumers and of supplies to the others through controlled shops and markets. During the last few days, much has been said in this House about priority consumers and the supplies that we have considered it necessary to make available to them from time to time. Honourable members will pardon me if I say that much of their criticism has been misconceived. Can anyone seriously argue that Government have, of set purpose, created an artificial, privileged class in Calcutta and the districts that has no claims to any prior consideration on the part of the community? If I had the time to do so, I would have read out to the House seriatim the different classes of consumers that have been included

in our priority list. It is entirely incorrect to say that list consists only of industrial labour employed by British commercial interests. The House will be assured to know that industrial labour employed by comparable Indian industrial and commercial concerns occupy an equally large place in our priority list. Further, the list included not merely industrial labour, but also all the essential services, including public utilities, without which the even tenor of civic life, in these anxious and uncertain days, would be in grave jeopardy. A special responsibility would have vested, in similar circumstances, in any Government, worth its name, to make special arrangements for such organisations and services. Do those honourable members who have criticised Government's policy in this matter seriously suggest that we have erred in doing what every other Government has done, and what any Government must do to protect the foundations of its superstructure? From this, it does not, of course, follow that we have no obligations to the rest of the community. As I have already said, I do not consider our present policy as regards distribution to be by any means adequate. But now that we have succeeded in securing adequate control over the supplies of some of the essential commodities, the question of an improved system of distribution in Calcutta is under our active consideration. A special officer for the planning of distribution in Calcutta and the industrial area has been appointed, and his report is awaited by Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we know, Sir, how much time will be allowed to the Hon'ble Minister? It would have been better if the statement had been printed and circulated.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it would have been better, but that has not been done. So I think that it is better if he reads it out so that you can give a fitting reply.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But he will take the whole of the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will give you time to reply.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: Sir, honourable members have already taken four days.

I now turn to the all-important question of supplies of rice and paddy. The main facts about the rice situation are well known to the honourable members of this House, and in course of this debate some of them have surveyed almost all the important aspects of the problem. I shall, therefore, refrain from entering into a historical review of the different stages through which this problem has passed since our Purchase Scheme, in pursuance of the denial policy, was put into force in the summer of 1942. I shall content myself with a very brief analysis of the present situation.

The current year's crop is estimated to be about 73 lakhs of tons. This, it must be admitted, compares very unfavourably with the crop of 1941-42. But it should be remembered that 1941-42 was a bumper year. The present state of statistics makes it extremely difficult to express any definite view as to the extent of shortage that we may experience in the current year. Our consumption statistics are no more defendable than our production

figures, but if we take the average of the production statistics and the import and export figures of the last four years, the total average amount retained in the province in a year comes to about 85 lakhs of tons. Assuming that this represents an average consumption figure in a year, we shall probably be short in the coming year to the extent of about 10 lakhs of tons or, say, approximately by about 15 per cent. of the current year's crop. This is the prospect to which we must face up in the near future.

Many of the honourable members have referred to the question of exports from this province. I would inform them that for several months now this Government have impressed on the Government of India the necessity for treating Bengal not as a surplus but as a deficit province. In course of their acceptance of the Central Government's scheme for the centralized purchase and regulation of movement of food-grains, they have stipulated that the requirement of this province should have precedence over all other needs however urgent they may appear to the Central Government. Honourable members may therefore rest assured that we are determind to see that the internal requirements of this province receive paramount consideration.

But even if exports are to be ruled out of consideration, that does not absolve us from the necessity of husbanding our resources to the best of our ability. Indeed, it is only by the most efficient mobilisation of our food resources that we can hope to tide over the difficulties that lie ahead of us. It is from this conviction that we decided to launch on our scheme of purchases, which has come in for so much criticism, from different and sometimes mutually conflicting points of view, from the honourable members of this House. The main features of this scheme are—

(*i*) first, that we shall buy paddy and rice from a number of buying areas in this province;

(*ii*) secondly, that such buying shall be made through our approved agents and under such terms as to prices, etc., as we shall lay down;

(*iii*) thirdly, that restrictions on the movement of paddy and rice from our buying as well as non-buying areas except under permits to be issued by our Food-grains Purchasig Officer should be imposed;

(*iv*) fourthly, that these buying activities will be supervised by a special officer, called Foodgrains Purchasing Officer, who will work under the guidance and control of the Directorate of Civil Supplies.

The honourable members will notice that the object of the scheme is to collect as much grain as we can from our buying areas at reasonable prices by preventing speculators and other large scale buyers from operating in these areas. Many honourable members have wanted to know how these buying areas were selected, and have enquired if any statistics of the production of grain in these areas and their requirements were studied. I would only say that our buying areas are those districts of the province from

where, for many years past including the current year, our traders have been accustomed to shifting grain to other places, and from where, I make bold to say, rice merchants and dealers would have purchased and shifted rice even in the current year, if they were free to do so. For instance, there is no reason to believe that the export trade in grain would have ceased to flow from the districts of Bakarganj, 24-Parganas, Burdwan or Birbhum if only Government had set back and not embarked on their purchasing policy. It was, therefore, useless to enter into a statistical investigation as to whether these districts were in surplus or deficit particularly as such an investigation could hardly yield any satisfactory results.

Besides, there is one important consideration that I would urge upon the honourable members. Even if it were true that all the districts in this province were in deficit in the current year, what would be the policy that they would advocate? Must we sit tight and do nothing to mobilise our available resources? Assuming that there was an all-round shortage, must we not spread this shortage most equitably all over the province? I would beg of my honourable friends to look at this question from this point of view. From this standpoint, our scheme of purchase is nothing but a technique of distributing the existing rice resources of this province in the most equitable manner. How far this technique will succeed will depend on the efficiency of our purchasing organisation and the ability of our Food-grains Purchasing Officer.

I am free to admit that I am talking on a highly controversial subject when I refer to the agency system for the purchase of rice and paddy. But I would only say this. The department had been closely watching the operations of this system, and it was only when its inadequacy had been demonstrated that a change in policy was decided upon. I acknowledge that this was the only possible system to employ until Government itself was in a position to operate commercially itself, and the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems had been carefully weighed by the department. It has been decided that the system will now be changed and the Government Purchasing Officer will buy direct from the trade and not merely from the agents. But only those traders who are prepared to collect and sell rice or paddy to Government at reasonable prices will be permitted to move their purchases out of the buying districts. We expect that this system will give facility to the cultivator in providing a large number of centres at which he can sell; but we do not intend that it would give facility to the speculator by allowing anyone to rush into the market and buy in the hope of high profits. Under this system all reputable dealers who can deliver the goods and deliver them at the right price will have a chance. In taking this action it is our desire to assist the restoration of the business of reliable traders, but we have no intention of placing ourselves in the hands of speculators; I repeat the warning that the embargoes will be retained to prevent the movement of speculative purchases. By this means also we hope to obtain the co-operation of the genuine trader in giving us information of deliberate attempts to obstruct or to hoard.

Before I pass on to the next item of our purchase policy, I would say a word about a criticism that has been levelled against the buying methods of our Food-grains Purchasing Officer. It is true that, at the initial stages of his purchases, this official made purchases of rice in Calcutta from merchants who were not our agents, at prices which were higher than the parity of the prices in the districts at which we instructed our agents to buy. But this confusion arose primarily over different estimates of the quality of the grains purchased. Besides, it should be remembered that the purchases made by our Purchasing Officer were all F.O.R. Calcutta, and exclusive of all agency charges that we would have had to pay if we bought these quantities through our agents. Now that we have decided to abolish the agency system, all these arguments are more or less of an academic interest. For, our Food-grains Purchasing Officer will now buy from the trade at the best possible price and not at any price laid down by us in advance.

Several honourable members have referred to the needs of deficit areas. It is our ultimate object to supply the deficit areas out of our own purchases, but till we are in a position to do so, permits for the import of rice and paddy will be issued in favour of the approved dealers and merchants by the Magistrates of importing districts. I propose to issue necessary orders on the Directorate of Civil Supplies immediately.

I have already said that the success of our method can be judged only in the light of experience. If this method does not work, we may be compelled to oust all private trade and to acquire for ourselves a monopoly for the purchase of the entire marketable surplus of grain in this province. That is a tremendous responsibility to shoulder. As yet we have neither the organisation nor the financial resources to take this extreme step, but if circumstances compel us to take it, we shall not flinch from this course.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Sir, it was not my intention to take part in the debate but conditions in this province, and particularly in Calcutta, have so rapidly deteriorated since the commencement of the present session and even of this debate that I feel I shall be failing in my duty to my constituency and to the House if I do not make my humble contribution to it. I shall confine myself to the rice situation now prevailing in Bengal.

Sir, after the bombings, life in our city was dislocated. There was not only a flight of labour but also of a large number of civilians. Restaurants, eating shops and *modi* shops closed down everywhere, thus presenting a serious problem for those who remained behind. The Director of Civil Supplies, whose sincerity and capability are unquestionable, lost no time in convening several conferences of almost every branch of the foodstuff trade at which many decisions were taken. Plans and schemes were formulated and assurances were given that they would be put into operation without the least delay. It is regretttable that these assurances, for reasons best known to the Government, were not implemented. A Food-grains Purchasing Officer was appointed to attend to this aspect of the problem. He was to render every assistance necessary to the duly appointed agents of Government to enable them to purchase rice and paddy at or under the

maximum prices fixed by the Government. From the very beginning, however, such assistance was not available to the promised degree. Agents complained that other interests were purchasing rice and paddy in their zones at above the control rates of Government. Not long after, to the surprise of many, the Food-grains Purchasing Officer was actually reported to be buying rice at above the control prices. Government cannot deceive the people all the time by issuing periodical statements that the rise in price was due to hoarding and profiteering and to the existence of "black markets," particularly when the Purchasing Officer himself was buying above the maximum price.

Another aspect of the situation is the callousness and indifference shown by the Council of Ministers. In this regard we have had promises of several descriptions and varieties from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, not one of which he has been able to fulfil. If his promises could have produced rice, our province would not have had to pass through the present crisis, at least so long as Mr. Fazlul Huq was connected with the Ministry. Unfortunately, his promises produce nothing—not even momentary satisfaction. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, prefers an hour in the Cinema to the Question Hour in this House. His knowledge of rice and other foodstuffs is confined to the dining table.

The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: On a point of order, Sir. I heard the honourable member saying something like my attending the Cinema in Question Time. I would like to know if that is what he said.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. You will have an opportunity to reply to it.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Can we expect a better handling of the situation, which is growing more and more acute every day, from a person who cannot appreciate or evaluate the conditions prevailing in the province today?

Sir, the matter is far too serious. No time can be wasted as the problem does not brook delay. With an increasing department and a diminishing supply to handle, I do not know what the Hon'ble Minister proposes to do to get us out of our not insuperable difficulty. He may perhaps fully follow in the footsteps of his colleagues, wash his hands of the problem and leave it to the much maligned and unfortunate permanent officials who alone take the odium for the mistakes while the Ministers try to gather with both their hands the little credit that comes.

Today, in Calcutta, coarse rice is selling at Rs. 19-8 per maund and a very small quantity at that as against the control rate of Rs. 8-12 a maund *plus* annas 12—charges for bringing down the rice to Calcutta. Patnai rice is being sold at Rs. 21 per maund as against the controlled price of Rs. 11-8 per maund *plus* annas 12 per maund for transport and other charges. In other words, rice is being sold at almost Rs. 10 a maund above the control prices. Today's prices, no one can deny, are

prohibitive and the House will be surprised to learn that even at these prices the quantity that is available in Calcutta is very small. Tollygunge has 60 mills; 56 of these mills are idle for want of paddy. The position has grown so acute that for every transaction of 200 to 300 bags of rice, the market shoots up by Re. 1 per maund. What is more distressing is the fact that there does not seem any prospect of a decline in the immediate or near future. In the last three or four weeks prices have advanced by Rs. 7 to Rs. 8 per maund. The effect has been to encourage the holding back of the surplus rice and paddy even by cultivators. No one can deny that the price level in Calcutta reacts on the price level in the province. If the price of rice moves up in Calcutta the price of rice in the districts moves up in sympathy. When prices in Calcutta decline, prices in the districts record a similar reaction. Our effort, therefore, has immediately to be to bring about a state of affairs which will give us plenty of rice in Calcutta at a reasonable price so that the undue rise in the districts may also be checked forthwith. As the time at my disposal is short I cannot give more of it to criticism. So I shall submit a few suggestions for stabilising the position and for improving the situation in Calcutta and in the province. My suggestions are—

First, that restrictions imposed on the movement of rice in the districts of Bengal should be removed and Government, having failed to stabilise the food situation, should abdicate control allowing the normal trading machinery to function with demand, supply and competition coming into free play.

Secondly, rice must be brought into Calcutta and the surrounding industrial areas without delay from more fortunate provinces. In Sambalpur (Orissa) the price of coarse rice today is Rs. 8-8 a maund and fine rice is available at Rs. 10 per maund. Freight and other charges for bringing the rice to Calcutta are Re. 1 per maund. In the Central Provinces, Nagpur, Gondia, etc., the price of medium rice is Rs. 9 per maund and fine rice Rs. 10 per maund, freight and other charges being Re. 1-8 to Re. 1-12 per maund. In Assam, which has had a surplus crop this year, medium rice is being sold at about Rs. 12 per maund. The cost of bringing down this rice is not more than Re. 1 per maund. Compare these prices with those ruling in Calcutta and even in the districts of Bengal today, and you will realise, Sir, the wide gulf that exists between the two. By importing large quantities of rice into Calcutta and stocking it, the influence on the existing conditions will be two-fold—

(1) the cultivators and petty holders will not continue to cling to the bulk of their holdings and will sell out to take maximum advantage of the high prices before the large imports from other provinces result in a sharp lowering of the price level;

(2) from Bengal itself more rice will come to the Calcutta market and will be sold at more reasonable rates than the consumer is called upon to pay today.

Thirdly, control on wholesale prices should be straightaway scrapped, but Government should control and regulate the retail prices by manipulation. This step in the tackling of the Indian wheat situation yielded good results. Prices at first moved up on the removal of the maximum rate, but it did not take long for the position to stabilise and the prices then declined. A similar effect may be produced on rice in Bengal. The experiment is worth the trial.

Fourthly, Government should speedily move with strength and determination in the matter of importing wheat from abroad. We read in Government of India war front advertisements that ships are ploughing their way to India carrying cargoes of wheat and food to feed our millions. These ships are either not leaving their ports or are being lost by enemy action or are being directed to undisclosed ports other than Indian. What we want is wheat and not empty talk. Sir, you will be interested to learn that the ships that come into Indian ports actually take away with them between two to six months' provisions for their crews. Why cannot arrangements be made for them in other more fortunate countries?

The Nawab Bahadur of Dacca was pleased to state in the other place as recently as yesterday that there had been no export of rice from Bengal since August, 1942. He is either misinformed or is deliberately misinforming members of the Legislature or is under the impression that the Island of Mauritius is situated in the Sundarbans; or that he wants us to believe that rice purchased for export to Mauritius in October, 1942, and actually shipped in December, 1942, was exported in August, 1942. We, on this side of the House, have protested in vain against responsible Ministers making irresponsible and incorrect statements.

Fifthly, it must be admitted without further discussion and loss of time that the rice crop of Bengal has fallen short of the normal by at least 30 per cent. The Government of Bengal have, after all, been compelled to admit the shortage to be 25 per cent. while the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan puts it down to a much higher figure.

Admitting that we are short of food-grains in the province, steps should be taken to put into force a well-balanced scheme of rationing food-stuffs to begin with in Calcutta and the industrial areas around it. There is no escape from rationing. The sooner it comes into being the better will it be for us all. The acute food shortage was known to children in the street by the end of December. It was apprehended, and here Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee will bear me out, that the statement I am making is correct, by those in the rice trade as early as November. Government however closed their eyes and the Hon'ble Ministers busied themselves with other less strenuous occupations. This is what is meant by the phrase—"Nero fiddles while Rome burns."

I shall finish in a minute, Sir. In order to bring to you how badly the Government have ruined the interests of the province may I just say that instead of putting greater force into the "Grow More Food" Campaign our Ministers in their great wisdom have decided that the acreage under

jute for 1943 should be eight annas of 1940. This acreage was unwarranted. Government have thus wantonly attempted to reduce the growing of paddy and other food-grains in the province. They have committed what is almost a crime in the eyes of the people who cannot get their daily food even at the current high prices. I hope even at this late hour they will take the matter up seriously beyond their ministerial chambers and do something sensible to avert a catastrophe which is at the very gate of Writers' Buildings. Sir, if my words carry no fear to those Ministers of ours, do not the looting of *hâts*, grain carts, shops and dacoities make them realise the chances of food riots on a wider scale? These may be suppressed by the force of the Government and bullets, but it will be admitted that a hungry man will do anything to feed himself and his family, and it will not be wrong when I say that in the forcible suppression of these riots the morals of the cause will be in favour of the rioter and not a Government which has neglected him criminally.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Sir, the time at my disposal is very short and, therefore, I wish only to touch upon a few main problems regarding control in this House today. The problem of food has assumed such proportions that in spite of all efforts of Government, the control has miserably failed. The more the control the worse has become the situation. And the situation is now intolerable and desperate. Sir, if we had taken the question of food supply for the whole of India as one, this situation would have never arisen. A responsible member of the Government of India has said that so far as India is concerned, the shortage is only 4 per cent. So far as export is concerned, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker has stated that the food shortage is not due to export. He said that the average annual exports of food-grains from India from the beginning of the war till the end of November, 1942, including military as well as civilian consignments are appreciably less than the average annual export for the years immediately preceding the war which amounted to 1 or 2 per cent. of the food-grains production of the country. Therefore, the export question is not at all an important question. So far as supply is concerned the shortage, if you take the whole of India, is not more than 4 per cent. or 5 per cent. Sir Sirdar Jogendra Singh has stated that the total acreage under rice and millet was increased from 73 million acres to 79·6 million acres as a result of the "Grow More Food" Campaign. An increase of 6 million acres under rice and millet which was stated to be the goal has been achieved.

Now, so far as the supply problem is concerned, if the Government of India thinks that the country taken as a whole is quite sufficient to maintain its population, there is no reason why there should have been so many barriers in the way of a proper distribution of food throughout the whole country. It is maldistribution, Sir, which is responsible for the high price of rice in Calcutta, rising to Rs. 20 per maund when the price of rice in Bihar, as stated by Mr. Ispahani, is Rs. 8 per maund. We are under a system, as it appears, under which India is like the Continent of Europe where Germany has put up barriers against France, France has put up barriers against another country, and so on. That is the simple reason why we are now suffering from shortage.

The next question is that whenever Government has introduced control it has not yielded in diminution of prices, but has resulted in an increase of price. As an instance I can cite that there was no dearth of sugar in this country. It was the control of sugar which was responsible for the scarcity which we face in this country. I can give you one index of figures from which it will be clear that it is the control which is responsible and not anything else from which we are suffering. The index price of sugar in December 1941 was 150, in January 1942 it was 144, in February 1942 it was 146, in April 1942 it was 157, and then came the control and the black market and the rate was 166 in May which went up to 190 in June and 192 in July. This is the direct result of control because there was no scarcity of sugar in India. Mills were producing enough sugar in order to provide the whole country with sugar. As a matter of fact, the transport requirement for sugar was very negligible. One hundred and forty wagons per day would have been quite sufficient to supply the whole of India, but then came the control and with it came the suffering. The question is why people are hankering after control, and control, and control. The reason is obvious. Today the Government is anxious to get recruits. The Government is anxious to get its labour supply, and therefore the conditions which are prevailing outside this circle are put so high that people are induced to be industrial labourers or to be in the war services: otherwise there is no other way for these people to maintain themselves. Government officials are eager for control because in their whole lives they have not found a better opportunity for making money than the times under control. The merchants are not averse to control because they were satisfied with a profit of 4 annas per maund before control, and under the system of control they are getting a profit of 5 to 7 rupees per maund. The consumers are the only sufferers, but unfortunately they are under the delusion that whenever there is a rise in price there must be control. The popular belief is that if there is control there is a solution of the problem; and the Government, the mill-owners, the Government servants and those who count are always under this belief, that control is the only thing which is possible. I say with all the emphasis that I can command that so long as the whole of India is not treated as one country and so long as these districts and inter-provincial barriers are not removed, whatever system you may inaugurate it is bound to fail. You cannot by any stretch of imagination have an impartial, just, honest officialdom because of the opportunities before them. Suppose a man is getting Rs. 50 per month; if he can get an opportunity of earning Rs. 5,000 per month, no ordinary human being is there who can resist the temptation. That is the problem. It must be tackled from this angle of vision. So far as the problem of Bengal is concerned, if there is a deficit of 25 per cent., an effort should be made in order to get the commodity from the adjoining provinces. I cannot understand why there should be a cry for control in an agricultural country like India with a deficit of 4 per cent. with export not to be counted and everything all right.

I have no more time to dwell on the subject save and except in a general manner, but I do believe that the more people understand the problems of

this country and the more they do not compare them with those of Russia and Germany which have got their own National Governments, their national questions, where conditions are quite different from what are prevailing in this country, and the more people know what is to be done in this country the better for the future.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the few brilliant speeches delivered this afternoon, especially the one delivered by my esteemed friend Mr. Ispahani, I feel a little ill at ease because I am diffident enough as to whether I can contribute anything new or original to the suggestions that have been made by Mr. Ispahani. I deeply appreciate the statement made by Mr. Ispahani this afternoon, because there is nothing wrong, nothing incorrect in the statement he has made. For days together we have had reports from various quarters in the mofussil areas that people are dying of starvation, that prices have gone up higher and higher till at last they have reached a stage which is beyond any control. From my own constituency in Murshidabad, in Jalangi police-station, in Sadar subdivision, I received a report only a few days ago that a man, goaded on to uncontrollable desperation, committed suicide by hanging himself on the tree. This is really a desperate situation. I have had reports from other sources also that some people had taken poison and committed suicide. This is the state of things that presents itself before us. Sir, no bungling, no evasive reply from any quarters will convince us. At least on this question all sections of the House are agreed that no political controversies should be raised. This is a problem which affects the vital interests of the millions of people who are knocking about the streets for a morsel of food at this critical juncture. True, various factors, various predisposing conditions have brought about this situation, but yet sufficient control, efficient control, effective and honest control might have improved the situation to a great extent.

Sir, I will quote certain figures which will show that prices in Calcutta from the week ending 2nd January have gone up as high as from Rs. 12-8 to Rs. 15 on the 27th February. It is Rs. 20 to Rs. 24 today. In Bolpur for the week ending 2nd January it was Rs. 14-8; on the 27th February it was Rs. 15. In Lalbagh it was Rs. 11-12; on the 27th February it was Rs. 13-5. In Kandi subdivision it was Rs. 8-12 and on the 27th February it was Rs. 12-10. That shows which way the wind is blowing. The situation is so grave, so serious, so desperate that it is time that all sections of the House should sit together and evolve a scheme which will try to save the situation and ease the difficulties that confront us at the present moment.

Sir, the causes that have contributed are said to be the shortage of food crops in this province, transport difficulties, denial policy introduced by the Government in April, 1942, and various other things due to the political unrest that caused dislocation in communications in Bihar and other provinces of India. But as Mr. Ispahani has pointed out—he has anticipated me—and I have also definite reports and I think the reports are

correct—that even now the purchasing officers are allowed to purchase any quantities of rice at prices much higher than the controlled prices. That has defeated the agency system; it is not that the agency system has failed; it is because the agency system has not been given a fair trial; it is because these people have not been allowed to have that experiment in the proper sphere. That is the thing that has troubled us most.

I would appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department to look into the matter very seriously, to consider this problem very carefully. Has he ascertained the real stock that is under control at the present moment? Has he ever cared to realise the gravity of the situation? Has he tried to understand the real problem in all its implications, in all its significance? Bengal is a deficit province. Burma rice has been stopped, but I have had information and reports from various quarters that rice in any quantity had been surreptitiously exported from this country. Even now it is being exported. I have had information from Burdwan and Birbhum that rice has been purchased in any quantity. It has either been forced down to the black markets, hoarded or sent out of the country.

Sir, supposing, as Mr. Ispahani has suggested, we are to import sufficient quantities of rice from other provinces and countries, but at the same time we are not sure of the grounds, we are not sure as to whether any quantities of rice would be exported out of this country, how are we going to adjust the conflicting interests of the various sections of people? True, the military considerations and industrial demands must be satisfied, but they must not be satisfied at the cost of the civil population. The civil population too have got to be maintained; they have got to be fed; the country cannot be bled white. We must satisfy the demands of the civil population. They are dying; they are bleeding; they are suffering; they are collapsing; they are starving. I would like to have a straight answer this evening from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department whether he has allowed the Civil Directorate Department not to direct the energies in the proper direction. Their control has not controlled the vagaries of the department; control has not controlled the shady, filthy transactions behind the scene; control has not controlled everything.

It has been suggested by Mr. Jalan that de-control will save the situation. I do not believe in that. Unless the commodities are sufficient to cope with the demand, there is no meaning in this free-flow of commodities. If there is insufficient blood in the system, there is no meaning in circulation. Therefore, the commodities must be sufficient. There must be adjustment of the debit and credit side of supply and demand; otherwise, there is no meaning in this free-flow. A proper control, efficient control, effective control, honest control at this critical juncture in the life history of the nation will save the situation. That is the problem that faces us at the present moment. It is a grave situation and I will appeal to the members of the Opposition with folded hands, with eyes full of tears and in all humility—that at least on this question we all agree that the people of this country have got to be saved—to save the people from the dire calamity. I would not take much time of the House this afternoon because

suggestions have come already from various quarters, from quarters more conversant with the problem and more experienced in the matter, because they know trade secrets much more than a layman like myself.

I have got certain suggestions of my own and with your permission, Sir, I will read out those suggestions to the members for their consideration. In order to improve the situation important steps have to be adopted at once to avoid dire calamity—

(1) First of all export of rice and paddy from Bengal should be prohibited.

(2) Government should arrange for the import of paddy crops from outside the province.

(3) Government should purchase, if necessary, to meet the requirements of the deficit areas.

(4) All prohibitory orders against movement of rice and paddy from one district to another should be withdrawn, thus restoring the normal channels of supply.

(5) The existing stock of paddy and rice throughout the province should be ascertained on a certain date to be appointed in that behalf by the Government. For that purpose every family in every union and municipality shall be required to submit a statement of stock in his own hand and under his control on a particular date. Any false statement or statements shall be penalised.

(6) A system should be introduced whereby licensed Government agents will be alone entitled to buy such quantities at such prices and in such areas as may be provided in the licence, and in the matter of issuing such licences, co-operative societies may be preferred.

(7) Paddy and rice shall be purchased and sold on fixed prices, such prices varying in different areas and subject to revision under changed circumstances.

(8) Licensed traders shall be required to submit periodical returns of the stocks purchased and sold by them to the local authorities and these stocks and accounts shall be subject to inspection. In fixing the price, Government should take into account the cost of transport and reasonable profit.

(9) Control price shall be enforced by legislation providing for penalty in cases of transactions at rates higher than controlled prices.

(10) There shall be Advisory Boards, (*a*) Central Board consisting of experts, representatives of the Legislature and the public; (*b*) District Advisory Board composed of M.L.A.'s and M.L.C.'s, representatives of District Boards and Municipalities; (*c*) Subdivisional Advisory Board composed of local M.L.A.'s and M.L.C.'s and representatives of Union Boards. The District Magistrate, the District Supply Officer and the Subdivisional Magistrate and the Subdivisional Supply Officer shall be *ex-officio* members of the District Advisory Board and the Subdivisional Advisory Board respectively.

These boards shall be empowered to regulate the working of the scheme. Priority in the matter of purchase shall be determined by the Trades Tribunal and not by any individual officer or officers concerned, in accordance with the principles laid down in consultation with the Central Advisory Board.

One word more, Sir, and I have done. I do not like to trouble the House any further. I will appeal to all sections of the House that all controversies must be hushed, all personal jealousies must sink, all mutual recriminations must be thrown into the background. The problem that faces us today is the gravest of all and much more serious than the problem that confronted us at Midnapore. Sir, we can understand the ravages of Nature, we can understand the visitation of calamity over which we have no control. These are the ravages created by forces over which we have got no control. But let us control the prices, let us have control over the supply of commodities, let us have control over distribution, let us have control over prices and let us have control over everything that is controllable, so that the crisis of the nation can be saved. (Applause.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a previous occasion I spoke on a comprehensive amendment moved by myself on the main motion. Today, Sir, I propose to speak on the motion itself and I crave the indulgence of the House to give me a few minutes' patient hearing. Sir, it is difficult to speak on the present situation——

Mr. A. F. STARK: On a point of order, Sir. Has not the honourable member already spoken on this debate?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, he spoke once, but after that came the statement of the Hon'ble Minister in charge and I thought that he should be given a chance because he always entertains us with new points.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I submit with all humility that I do not want any charity either from the European Party or any party. I am entirely within the rules and rights of a member. If you will kindly look up the rules, you will see that a member can speak on a motion once, but on two motions twice. We have before the House three motions and I have spoken only once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, Dr. Sanyal, I have already given you a chance.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But you should not be apologetic to the European Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am apologetic to none.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: On a point of order, Sir. Is it in order that the Speaker should say that an honourable member entertains the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are sometimes entertained. I do not think there is anything wrong in the word "entertain".

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, may I submit to you that really the word "entertain" here is rather an insinuation? I would request you as the Speaker of the House not to use that word to any member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, as I said the other day it is English language and it is very difficult for me to realise the full import of the word "entertain". I have not used the word "entertain" with any motive or any insinuation. Therefore that question does not arise, but I will look up dictionary and if I see that it implies any insinuation, I will never use that expression again.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If the expression "entertain" is used in this House, entertainment tax may be imposed upon us some day. (Laughter.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I shall entertain the House today with a series of figures that I have collected with considerable pain regarding changes in the price of rice throughout Bengal for the last few weeks beginning from the second week of January, 1943. These figures over the whole range of the province indicate that there are certain well-defined week-ends after which the price showed distinct signs of sudden rise. On the second week in my list of figures, I mean on the week ending 2nd January the price of medium rice in Canning town was Rs. 12-8. It continued near about the same till about the 13th February, and thereafter it jumped to Rs. 14 on the 20th February; it went up to Rs. 15 on the 27th February; and, Sir, from the 1st March when it was Rs. 16-14, it rose on the 4th March to Rs. 17-14, on the 5th March to Rs. 18-8, on the 6th March to Rs. 18-14, on the 8th March to Rs. 20-14, and today the price is Rs. 21-8. That is at Canning near about the Calcutta market. In Basirhat similarly on the 2nd of January the price was Rs. 8-12; this continued right up to the 13th February, then it fluctuated between Rs. 8-12 and Rs. 10 and came down to Rs. 9. From the 20th it began to rise until on the 27th it was Rs. 13 and gradually it went up till today it is nearly Rs. 21. At Burdwan which is another buying district it was Rs. 11-8 on the 13th February and it suddenly went up to Rs. 13-8 on the 27th February and then went up to Rs. 15-8 on the 8th and today it is about Rs. 16. In Birbhum similarly there has been a rise from Rs. 11-8 on or about the 9th January to Rs. 12-8 on the 27th February—by the way, I may tell you that on the 13th February it was only Rs. 11—then from the 1st March onwards there has been a steady rise from Rs. 11-4 to Rs. 14 on the 8th and today it is Rs. 14-8 to Rs. 15.

Sir, I have only quoted the prices at a few selected centres from the purchasing districts so that the House might notice from that that there has been a certain well-defined period during which prices had suddenly risen and from this statistics I am constrained to draw the conclusion that there must have been some measures or some steps or some actions of Government which have led to these sudden jumps at stated periods.

Sir, on my investigation it was revealed that about the middle of February the Government had been discussing this new policy of scrapping the agency system of purchase which they decided after a considerable examination of the question and on or about the 18th of February when or immediately after we began the debate in this House Government had terminated the agency system by issuing letters of termination to their respective agents. The immediate implication of that was that the Food-grains Purchasing Officer——

(At this stage the blue light was lit.)

Sir, how many minutes you intend to give me? Will you not kindly make some allowance for the interruptions?

Mr. SPEAKER: I intend to give you five minutes, and I have made allowance for the interruptions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I submit that the present state of affairs is due to two main reasons: first of all, stands the system of introducing free purchase by the Food-grains Purchasing Officer, contrary to the assurance given on the floor of this House that before a new policy was determined Government would not introduce anything of the nature although that was then apprehended. At that time I recorded a definite indignation in the House. As you will remember I said, "God will help Bengal if this system is substituted by another without previous examination of its implications". Secondly, there was a conference on the 3rd and 4th of March and another policy was adopted, namely, that the price control would be withdrawn. I shall not enter—because I have not the time to do it—into the details of the various pros and cons of control and de-control. If there is any machinery set up I shall be in a position to explain fully how if the policy of de-control is adopted what economic forces would be set at liberty thereby. Unfortunately we are not writing on a clean slate today—I also mention this for the knowledge of my esteemed friend Mr. Jalan that we cannot now go back to the policy of de-control without taking a very serious risk. I submit there should be no attempt either to withdraw the prohibition of movements from the districts because Calcutta has got a very large buying power, and as soon as restrictions to movements from the other districts would be withdrawn there will be famine in the districts as Calcutta will buy up all the stocks of the districts and the districts will not get any foodstuff for their own purposes. The main and essential thing is to create public confidence. Let us know from Government what machinery they propose to create that confidence which is very much needed.

Sir, we have already explained fully how the present Government, particularly the Minister in charge, has lost the confidence of all sections including the members of his own party, and the file must be entrusted to somebody more competent and who may be in a position to deliver goods and to revise the whole thing properly.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, before I speak to the resolution, I wish to draw your attention to the Government trying to stop publication of the details of this debate in the Press of the country. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Fie, fie.) It is a breach of privilege of the House and I appeal to you, Sir, to see that the Press is not handicapped in this way.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I hope you will take notice of this.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information, Sir, but before I am called upon to reply to the debate I shall try to find out what the actual position is. At present I know nothing.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it not a fact that Mr. B. G. Rao, the Press Officer, had addressed the Press inviting their attention to a note of December on the basis of which he says, "As the debate is going on in this Legislature the Press should note that nothing will be published unless it is previously press-censored".

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you may get an answer in the course of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister's speech.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, the statement of the Hon'ble Minister was read so fast and so hurriedly that it was difficult to catch him at any point whatsoever. I did not understand it, and I am doubtful if he himself understood what he has stated (Laughter). But, Sir, the points that he mentioned and which I think I understood correctly were, first, that the agency system for purchasing rice had failed. All sensible men would have been surprised if it had been otherwise. The agent was asked to buy at the controlled price of "X" rupees while the Government Purchasing Officer bought the same commodity at price "X+Y". In these circumstances no agent, howsoever clever he might be, could succeed. The second point, which the Hon'ble Minister thought he was trying to make, falls to the ground for the simple reason that he does not know his facts. Between January 26 and February 25, Government purchased about 5½ lakh maunds of rice and till to-day I do not think more than 50,000 maunds have been actually purchased. If that is so, and deliveries are not going to be made, the figures he has given are meaningless. Sir, the apologia of the Hon'ble Minister is best exemplified by the Persian saying: تا تو به من رسي من به خدا میرسم which freely translated means, "Until you come to me, I shall have reached kingdom come".

The whole speech or better still, the whole statement from top to the bottom is unhelpful and meaningless so far as we are concerned. Sir, the best condemnation of the policy followed by the Government came from the most unexpected quarter, that is, from the Secretary of the Government Progressive Coalition party. We could not have said things which he has said, and yet at the end of it, like the Kabuli money-lender who

says to his victim—"Tum Hamara Bhai Hay Ham Tumara Bhai hay"—he has asked us not to make the resolution a party question because we must all sympathise with the sufferings of the people. Sir, our sympathy began months ago. The appeal of the Secretary of the Government Party is part of a well laid plan. The Chief Minister tried the same game in another place yesterday. Not finding sufficient material to throw the blame on any other party or parties, they think sentimentalism will extricate them out of the bog into which they have fallen and are dragging Bengal behind them. Now, this newly acquired sympathy in the hearts of the Progressive Coalition group and its representatives on the Ministerial benches is really interesting.

But without wasting further time, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the effort that is being made by the Ministers to hoodwink and mislead it. I shall forgive the Chief Whip of the Government because he had to place before the House a resolution in the drafting of which or even in the understanding of which he had no hand. Sir, the resolution is intended deliberately to deceive (Cries of "Hear, Hear" from the Opposition benches) the House, for this reason that it says: "This Assembly do take into consideration the situation in the province relating to the supply and distribution of food-stuffs, coal, kerosene, oil and cloth". Mr. Speaker, this resolution, as annotated by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in his Financial Statement, leads us into a channel which is blocked. His statement read with the resolution has upset me completely. In his Financial Statement he said, "..... actual control of all supplies of imported wheat and *dal*; of domestic coal; of sugar; and, thanks to the co-operation of the Oil Companies, of kerosene". Sir, food-stuff in the resolution before us does not mean rice. Food-stuff in this resolution means wheat and *dal* only. I had occasion to be present at certain meetings of the Committee at which responsible officers of Government informed us that rice was impossible to control, either at its source or in its price or in its distribution. The language of the resolution is indeed misleading. Where they mean wheat and *dal* they try to hoodwink the House by the word food-stuffs. This is not right. Responsible Ministers should not mislead the House in this manner. Whatever has been done so far relates to imported food-stuffs, that is wheat and *dal* only, and not rice. The Hon'ble Ministers have done nothing. Kerosene, sugar, oil and all sorts of other commodities, that are being distributed and for which credit is being taken, are being controlled and managed by importers and commercial firms. The Government has failed hopelessly and miserably where it has tried to do anything by itself inside the province. If you will consider the manner in which the Ministers wished to control, I shall again quote from the Financial Statement of the Hon'ble and Learned Chief Minister, who happens to be in control of the Finances of the province also. Sir, he accused the department as consisting of "raw untrained material" and therefore steps had to be slowed down until, on the miseries of the public, these men learnt the ABC of control and of organisation. He further told us, Sir, that due to the mischievous activities of speculators, profiteers and hoarders, the Government had to

temporise. The temporisation, Sir, consists not only with speculators and so on but, and I make the statement with the fullest responsibility, with officers of the departments. Sir, there is a *liaison* between those who issue licences and give priority certificates and the merchants, very clever business-men, and yet we are told that it is these profiteers who create the black market. No, Sir, the commercial community holds its own views on the subject. It is prepared to serve the Government and the people but if it adopted governmental methods and arrangements, all would be lost. Rice would disappear. The liaison between the officers and the trade means Black Market and the misery of the public.

The resolution asks the House to take into consideration the situation in the province consequent on the bungling of the supply and distribution of food commodities. This we are doing. But what after that? You will recall, Sir, a similar dodge was played with us in connection with the Permanent Settlement Problem. The then Ministry wanted to know what the House thought of the Floud Commission Report and the Departmental comments on it. A whole sitting was wasted but no vote was taken. What is worse, Sir, is that nothing has been heard of the Report for ages now. Where is this consideration of the present food situation going to lead us? We shall expect a clear and categorical answer on the point. If it is to end in a farce as the Floud Report was, the sooner we put a stop to such talks the better.

Sir, we have further been told that the Government is going to spend 50 lakhs of rupees to buy food-stuff. Sir, you will laugh at the scheme which the Government is trying to put into operation to do this. Again I speak with knowledge gained from Government officers. The idea is that Government should buy grain in certain small quantities and release it when prices go up. This it will try as often as it can to disturb the merchants and the hoarders in Calcutta to bring down prices. Sir, the trade knows every grain of rice, where it goes and where it is kept. The merchants can afford to wait until the inexperienced, raw and incompetent men of the department, have sold their holdings. Fifty lakhs is a flea-bite; there are merchants in Calcutta who can spend 50 crores. Every scheme prepared in this callous, in this undigested, ill-conceived and amateurish manner will lead to an aggravation of the trouble. It will lead us nowhere for the simple reason that those at the helm of affairs do not know their job. A Bank Manager, who fed a few thousand evacuees from Burma, is going to feed 52 million people. Sir, where are we and what are we going to do with these gentlemen sitting on the Teasury Benches and leading us from day to day downwards, into misery? There is not enough rice to control. What is the Government going to control? How is it going to distribute? Every scheme suggested and every idea given is thrown to the wind and blown up to pieces for the reason that these gentlemen who talk so tall here have no policy whatsoever. They do not allow the departmental officers, who are trying to do their best to do their work. They interfere and poke their noses into a matter which they have neglected and ignored all these months. The people is face to face with starvation because of their indifference.

Sir, I could go on talking like this interminably but may I suggest through you to these worthy gentlemen to get rid of fear? They should come out boldly and courageously and decide upon Rationing. Let the Raja and the Praja get the limited amounts of their daily requirements; let the public shout and let the public protest. (Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What is your scheme?) My scheme has been given but the Government cannot understand it, it is incapable of understanding it. Dozens of schemes have been given through the Corporation, through the Muslim League and through others, months and months ago, but these Ministers were indifferent, their officers were incompetent and in the result public suffering grew worse and the country as a whole has been brought to a hapless pass. Sir, Rationing alone can meet the situation. If you have not got sufficient rice, if you have not got sufficient necessities of life for the public, reduce the quantities by half, but for goodness' sake take possession of what you have. Do not depend upon Behar or United Provinces or other Governments to solve your problem, and in the meantime, Sir, do not allow the public to starve, do not allow the public to curse provincial autonomy which has given the Ministers the power to occupy their *guddies* and allow the country go to the dogs. If Bombay could do it, these our popular Ministers could also adopt Rationing if they could muster a hundredth part of the courage of Bombay. If we talk of Rationing I am absolutely certain that the Chief Minister will tell us that a scheme of Rationing will require a great sum and long time of preparation and planning. Thus between preparation and execution the agony goes on prolonging.

If they mean business, let them accept expert service from the merchants and the trade. Let there be a clear distinction between Civil and Army rquirements. Let there be only one buyer and one seller and distributor. Merchants, shop-keepers and bankers should be conscripted into service. Every grain produced must be taken forcibly at reasonable prices and distributed among the rich and the poor equally. Rationing alone, as I have said, can save the situation.

Yesterday in the other place the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Minister for Commerce and Labour pathetically appealed that this question be not made a party question. Sir, it is not a question between a party and party; it is a question between the people and an incompetent Government. It is a question between starvation and existence. These incompetent people are leading us from racket to racket. Why do they not get out and allow the real representatives of the people to take the situation in hand. That is the result of the consideration of the situation by the people. There can be no *bhaichara* or rapprochement for which the Secretary of the Progressive Party appeals. There can be no such nonsensical collaboration or brotherhood to aggravate the misery. They have been callous and we want to prove to the people that due to the incompetence of those at the helm of affairs their misery, if not stopped soon, must continue on an increasing scale.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Khaitan.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we now request the Chief Minister to make a statement?

(Babu Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I have called upon Mr. Khaitan.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order. We would like to know in advance how long you propose to sit so that we may know whether we will have an opportunity of hearing the Chief Minister in full or we will have some opportunity of voting thereafter or before that; otherwise we will have to find out whether we will have a motion for closure of the debate.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I also support Dr. Sanyal on behalf of the members of this bloc. As you know, Sir, this debate has been continuing for four days and it was definitely said that it would be brought to a close today. My appeal to you, Sir, is that you should control the debate in such a manner that a decision may be taken at an early hour.

Mr. AFTAB ALI: On a point of privilege, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of privilege?

Mr. AFTAB ALI: We from the Labour Group have been trying to catch your eye for a long time but it seems to me that you are passing from one commerce member to another ignoring the two solitary members on this side. In view of the importance of the labour and industrial workers in regard to this problem of food we want to have a chance to put forward our point of view.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Aftab Ali, you will have your time but I would request you all not to take away the little time at our disposal in this way. I will give you some time.

Mr. AFTAB ALI: The views of high business and high commerce are being put forward and the trend of the speeches leads us nowhere. They talk of control, of prices but we consumers——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Aftab Ali, perhaps it is a sort of criticism of the way in which I have called upon the members to speak. That is highly objectionable. You cannot do that. I have told you that I will give you some time. I know you represent some labour constituency, but you are only two members sitting there, and when I was approached I promised that I will give you some time. You need not be in a hurry. I am not depriving you of your right.

Mr. Khaitan.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY : On a point of privilege, Sir, আমার বক্তব্য হচ্চে যে আজকে বিভিন্ন গ্রুপ্ থেকে একাধিক সভ্য বল্‌বার সুযোগ পেয়েছেন। মিঃ সিদ্দিকীর বল্‌বার একটু আগেই আপনার সেক্রেটারী এসে বলে গিয়েছিলেন যে, মিঃ সিদ্দিকীর পরেই আমাকে বলতে হবে। কিন্তু এখন আমাকে উপেক্ষা করে আমা [illegible]

ডাকা হয়েছে। আমি মনে করি যে পার্টির তরফ থেকে আমি বল্‌বার জন্য মনোনীত হয়েছি আমাকে সুযোগ না দেওয়ায় আমার বল্‌বার সেই অধিকারকে ক্ষুণ্ণ করা হয়েছে।

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Chakrabarty, the order is entirely in my hand. I can call upon you, I can call upon anybody else. If my Secretary informed you it was according to the desire of your Whip, I mean the Chief Whip of the Ministerial party, but subsequently that has been changed and I was informed that that was not the desire. Therefore I had to call upon Mr. Khaitan.

Mr. Khaitan.

Mr. DEBI PROSAD KHAITAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter that is being discussed by the House today is much too serious either for rhetoric or for party politics. The people of Bengal are almost starving either for want of food or because food is too costly to buy and the matters that we are discussing today are to find out who is to blame and what procedure should be adopted in future, so that the grievances of the people may be removed. For this purpose, it is necessary to go partly into the history of the question in order that we may remove the defects and adopt suggestions and remedies which would bring relief to the people at large.

Sir, black markets have been complained against; profiteers have been complained against. But let us analyse and find out what has given rise to the creation of the black markets. From the very beginning, it has been my humble endeavour to draw the attention of the authorities to the fact as regards food supply in this province. It is more a question of supply rather than control of prices, but prices were controlled in a manner to give rise not only to black markets but to corruption from top to bottom in various cases. (Cries of "Hear, hear'" from Muslim League Opposition benches.) I know of one official, Sir, about whose corruption there was not the slightest doubt, whose powers were taken away and subsequently his powers have been restored again. That gentleman has been practising corruption much more than he previously did. If this is the way in which control is going to be exercised, if the administration of control is going to be exercised by amateurs or by corrupt people, control can never succeed. If a Bank Manager and an evacuee from Burma can manage these affairs, surely the grievances of the people would increase rather than be reduced. The attention of the Hon'ble Minister was drawn by the Indian Chamber of Commerce against the appointment of the Bank Manager before he was appointed. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister was pleased even to give a complete assurance to the President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce that it is only a suitable and competent person that would be appointed and that an Indian would be appointed, but that assurance came to nothing. (A VOICE: As usual!) In fact, Sir, the whole department is being managed, as I have already said, either by amateurs or by corrupt people. This is what was happening from the very beginning. It is really a question of supply.

Now, let us see in what manner control has been exercised from the beginning. It has not been to increase supply, but it has been to stop

supply. I am aware that very large stocks of wheat and sugar were lying in the Calcutta godowns and merchants were not allowed to bring out those goods and sell them. Wheat and sugar were not allowed to be imported to Calcutta for more than a month simply because some control system was being devised and was likely to be put into operation. Sir, I submit that if there is to be a remedy for this difficult matter it is in free trade movement of goods, because a commercial genius knows from where to get goods, what quality to get and through what routes to get. What has happened is that these trade channels have been put a stop to, and what is more (although Mr. Aftab Ali was shouting to enable him to voice the grievances of the labourers) I am myself an employer and I want to see that my workers are satisfied, but from the very beginning I have been asking Government officials to see that the requirements of the civil population are not brushed aside and too much attention is not paid to industrial workers.

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Jogendranath Mandal.

Mr. AFTAB ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you did not give me an opportunity I prefer to withdraw from the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are quite at liberty to do so.

(Thereupon Mr. Aftab Ali withdrew from the House.)

Mr. JOGENDRANATH MONDAL: মাননীয় স্পীকার সাহেব—আজ বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যদ্রব্যাদির মূল্য অস্বাভাবিকরূপে বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ার জন্য যে সমস্যার উদ্ভব হইয়াছে তাহাতে ধনী-দরিদ্রনির্বিশেষে বাংলার জনসাধারণের মনে অত্যন্ত ভীতি ও বিভীষিকার সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। অনশনে এবং অর্দ্ধাশনে মৃতপ্রায় বাংলার লক্ষ লক্ষ নরনারীর কাতর ক্রন্দনে আজ বাংলার আকাশ-বাতাস অভিভূত হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। যদিও আমি জানি যে বুভুক্ষিত, নিষ্পেষিত, শোষিত জনগণের করুণ ক্রন্দন ও মর্ম্মবেদনা এই শ্বেত মর্ম্মরনির্ম্মিত সৌধ-কক্ষে উপবিষ্ট চিরসুখী অনেক মেম্বরের হৃদয় স্পর্শ করিবে না বা কোনরূপ সাড়া দিবে না তবুও আজ সেই উপেক্ষিত, শোষিত, আজ যাহারা অনাহারে মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হওয়ার উপক্রম হইয়াছে, তাহাদের পক্ষ হইতে তাহাদের মর্ম্ম-বেদনা সেই চিরসুখী জনের কাছে কিছু নিবেদন করার ইচ্ছা আমার আছে। সেই শোষিত এবং বুভুক্ষিত শ্রেণীর মধ্যে তপশীলভুক্ত জাতিসমূহ এবং এক শ্রেণীর মুসলমান আছে। এই তপশীলভুক্ত শ্রেণীর লোকেরা সকল ক্ষেত্রেই উপেক্ষিত হইয়া আছে। দেশের সুবিধা-সুযোগ কোনদিনই তাহারা লাভ করিতে পারে নাই। আজকে তাহাদের কোন ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য নাই। ব্যবসায়ের ক্ষেত্রে, শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে, সরকারী চাকুরীর ক্ষেত্রে, সকলদিক দিয়েই তাহারা পশ্চাৎপদ। শুধু তাহারা কিষাণ, খাটে এবং সামান্য জমি যদি কিছু থাকে তাহাতে খাদ্যশস্যাদি উৎপাদন করে। আজ ফাল্গুন মাস; এখনও অনেকের ঘরেই কিছু ধান-চাউল আছে। চৈত্র মাস হইতে না হইতেই কাহারও ঘরে কিছু থাকিবে না। তখন বাংলার শোষিত শ্রেণীর কি অবস্থা হইবে তাহা ভাবিলেও শরীর শিহরিয়া উঠে। স্পীকার সাহেব, আপনার বরাবরে আমি সেই চিরসুখী জনের কাছে নিবেদন করিতে চাই।

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN : On a point of order, Sir, The honourable member is speaking of us as "চির সুখী জন"।

Mr. SPEAKER : That is no point of order.

Mr. JOGENDRANATH MONDAL : আমি বলিয়াছি অনেক চিরসুখী জন। অল্পদিনের ভিতর কি অবস্থা হইবে সে কথা আমি জানাইতে চাই। শুধু গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রেষ্টিজ রক্ষা করার জন্য আমরা এখানে আসি নাই। দেশে একটী লোকও অনাহারে মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত না হয় সে দিকে দৃষ্টি রাখা গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রাথমিক কর্ত্তব্য ও দায়িত্ব রহিয়াছে। আমি মনে করি যে বাংলার জনসাধারণের যারা প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে এখানে আসিয়াছেন সম্প্রতি তাহাদেরও প্রধানতম কর্ত্তব্য এবং দায়িত্ব হইল বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান করা—যেন একটি লোকও অনাহারে মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত না হয়। গভর্ণমেণ্টকে নির্ব্বিচারে সমর্থন করিয়া যাওয়াই আমাদের পলিসি ও প্রোগ্রাম নয় এবং তাহা আমি সঙ্গতও মনে করি না। আমরা যখন এসেমব্লির সভ্যপদ প্রার্থী হইয়া ভোট ভিক্ষা করিয়াছিলাম তখন আমরা কি প্লেজ (pledge) দিয়ে এসেছিলাম? আমরা কখনও এরূপ প্লেজ দেই নি যে নির্ব্বিচারে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে সমর্থন করিয়া চলিব। আমরা এই প্লেজই দিয়েছিলাম যে আমরা তোমাদের দুঃখ, দৈন্য, অভাব-অভিযোগ দূর করতঃ সর্ব্ববিষয়ে তোমাদের সুবিধা-সুযোগ লাভের চেষ্টা করিব। তোমাদের স্বার্থ রক্ষা করিয়া চলিব। আজ আমি বলিতে চাই খাদ্যদ্রব্য সরবরাহ এবং মূল্য-নিয়ন্ত্রণ সম্পর্কে এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী কর্ত্তৃক অনুসৃত নীতি এবং তাঁহাদের সমস্ত চেষ্টা ব্যর্থতায় পর্য্যবসিত হইয়াছে। একদল অসাধু চরিত্রের লোকের জন্য এবং উৎকোচগ্রহণকারী কতকগুলি সরকারী ও বেসরকারী লোকের জন্য এই অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। অনেক মহাজন ও ব্যবসায়ী প্রফিটিয়ারিং করে একথা সত্য কিন্তু আমি বলিব মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর কতিপয় সভ্য থেকে আরম্ভ করে তাহাদের কতিপয় সমর্থকগণ এবং উর্দ্ধতম সরকারী কর্ম্মচারী থেকে নিম্নতম কর্ম্মচারী পর্য্যন্ত সকলেই মূল্য-সরবরাহ ও মূল্য-নিয়ন্ত্রণ ক্ষেত্রে অতি জঘন্যভাবে প্রফিটিয়ারিং করে। আজ তারা বাংলার লোকের প্রাণ নিয়ে ছিনিমিনি খেলিতেছে।

Mr. SPEAKER : Your time is up.

Mr. JOGENDRANATH MONDAL : আমি সংক্ষেপে শেষ করিতেছি। আমি আপনাদের কাছে নিবেদন করতে চাই। আমাদের অন্য কোন কর্ত্তব্য আজ নাই। বাংলার অন্নবস্ত্রের সমস্যার সমাধান করাই আমাদের প্রধান কর্ত্তব্য। শুধু খাদ্য-সমস্যা নহে, বস্ত্র-সমস্যাও অতিশয় কঠিন হইয়া দেখা দিয়াছে। ইতিমধ্যেই মানুষ অর্দ্ধনগ্ন হইয়াছে। আর কিছু কাল বস্ত্রের মূল্য এরূপ থাকিলে গরীব শ্রেণীর অনেককেই নগ্নদেহে থাকিতে হইবে। এমনও হইতে পারে যে আমাদের আবার সেই আদিম বর্ব্বর যুগের সম্মুখীন হইতে হইবে। আমি বলিতে চাই যে জনসাধারণের দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশা বিদূরিত করিতে হইবে। মাননীয় স্পীকার সাহেব, আমি আপনার বরাবরে এই কথাগুলি সদস্য মহোদয়গণের নিকট নিবেদন করিতে চাই। আজ কোন দলাদলির কথা নাই, সামান্য প্রেষ্টিজের কথা নাই। আজ আমাদের একমাত্র কর্ত্তব্য যাহাতে জনসাধারণ ক্ষুধায় অন্ন এবং পরিধানে বস্ত্র পায় তাহার ব্যবস্থা করা এবং এমন উপায় অবলম্বন করা যাহাতে এই অন্নবস্ত্র-সমস্যার আশু সমাধান হয়।

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRAVARTY: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়, আমার বিশ্বাস ছিল আমার বন্ধু সৈয়দ বদরুদ্দোজা সাহেবের বক্তৃতার পর আজকে বিতর্কের গতি অন্যদিকে পরিবর্ত্তিত হবে; কিন্তু দুঃখের সহিত জানাতে হচ্চে যে তা হয় নি। গালাগালি বা

দোষ প্রদর্শনের দ্বারা যদি বাংলাদেশের চাল-সমস্যার সমাধান হ'ত তাহ'লে এতদিনে বাংলার অভাব মিটে যেত। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় যাঁরা বক্তৃতা করেন তাঁরা ভুলে যান যে তাঁদের বক্তৃতার ফলে বাংলাদেশের আকাশ থেকে চাল মাটীতে ঝ'রে পড়বে না, আর বুভুক্ষু নরনারীর পেটও ভরবে না। সৈয়দ বদরুদ্দোজা সাহেব জানেন না যে 'পড়িলে ভেড়ার শৃঙ্গে ভাঙ্গে হীরার ধার। তিনি এমন জায়গায় আবেদন কোরেছেন যেখানে তাঁর আবেদন উপেক্ষিত হ'তে বাধ্য। আমার মনে আছে আমি গত সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে একথা বলেছিলাম যে অন্ততঃ এই একটা সমস্যার সমাধান আমাদের করতেই হবে, যে সমস্যার সঙ্গে রাজনীতির কোন সংস্পর্শ নেই। চাল নিয়ে চাল দিতে গেলে চল্‌বে না; চালের উপর চাল দিতে গেলে সকলের পেটেই আঘাত লাগবে। সেটা আপনার আমার নির্ব্বাচন-কেন্দ্রের কথা নয়, আপনার আমার জাতির কথা নয়, প্রত্যেকের পেটের কথা। সেই পেটের ভাতে আজ হাত লেগেছে, সমস্ত জাতির অঙ্গে আঘাত পড়েছে। কাজেই এখানে অন্য প্রশ্ন রেখে যদি সত্য সত্যই সেই দূরদর্শিতা থাকে, যদি সত্যই সেই আন্তরিকতা থাকে, তবে আজকে আমাদের চালাকির আশ্রয় নিয়ে, যেমন তেমন ক'রে প্রতিপক্ষকে আঘাত করবার দুষ্ট অভিসন্ধি নিয়ে ভোটের ফলাফলের দিকে লক্ষ্য রাখবার ইচ্ছাকে দমন করতে হবে। এটা একটা লোক দেখান জিনিস নয়। যদি সত্যকার সে প্রাণ, সে দরদ, সে আন্তরিকতা, সে মমত্ব বোধ থাক্‌তো তাহ'লে অনেক আগেই কিছু কাজ হ'ত। আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করছি যাঁরা বক্তৃতা করছেন, তাঁদের বক্তৃতায় কি কাজ হবে? প্রতিদিন কলিকাতার রাজপথের ওপর আমরা কি দৃশ্য দেখি? অগণিত নরনারী সারবন্দী হ'য়ে সকাল-সন্ধ্যায় একমুঠা চালের আশায় হাঁ ক'রে চেয়ে থাকে, যাদের ভাগ্য ভাল তারা নির্দ্দিষ্ট কিছু চাল কিন্‌তে পেরে বাড়ী যায়। অধিকাংশ লোককে বাড়ী ফিরতে হয় হতাশ হয়ে। এখানে যাঁরা বক্তৃতা করছেন তাঁরা বক্তৃতার মাত্রা একটু কমিয়ে নিজেদের পাড়ার এই দুঃখীদের যদি চেষ্টা করে চাল কিনে দিতে পারতেন, অনেক বেশী কাজ হতো। এখানে বক্তৃতা কোরে চালের সমস্যা মিটবে না। আমি জানি, আমরা জনসাধারণের প্রতিনিধি এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টকে সমালোচনা কর্‌বার অধিকার আমাদের আছে এবং তা থেকে আমরা বিচ্যুত হ'তে চাই না। আমরা তা ক'র্‌ব, কিন্তু সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মনে রাখ্‌তে হবে যে শুধু নিষ্ফল ও ব্যর্থ সমালোচনা দ্বারা চাল পাওয়া যাবে না। আমি আজকে সেপ্টেম্বর মাসের সমালোচনার কথা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে একটু স্মরণ কোরিয়ে দিতে চাই। সেদিন আমি সর্ব্বপ্রথমে বলেছিলাম যে আজকে যে সমস্যা বাংলার সম্মুখে এসেছে গভর্ণমেণ্ট তার দিকে অবহিত হউন; কিন্তু দুঃখের সহিত জানাতে হচ্চে তাঁরা তা হন নি। তার প্রধানতম কারণ হচ্চে আজকে ২।৩টা মাত্র প্রদেশে আংশিক জনমতদ্বারা গঠিত গভর্ণমেণ্ট আছে, আর সমস্ত জায়গায় স্বৈরাচার প্রবর্ত্তিত হয়েছে। আজ সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষের যাঁরা প্রভু তাঁদের দৃষ্টি নিবদ্ধ বাংলার প্রতি। এক বাংলাদেশের মন্ত্রিসভাই জনমতের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত এবং জনসাধারণের প্রতিনিধি দ্বারা পরিচালিত। বাংলাদেশের এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট লোকের চোখে হেয় হয়ে থাক্, এদেশের জনসাধারণ অপদার্থ, অকেজো এবং লোকমতের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে একটা fiasco সেটা প্রমাণ হয়ে যাক্ এবং জগতের সাম্‌নে প্রমাণিত হোক যে, বাংলায় এমন কোন ব্যক্তি নাই যিনি সেখানকার গভর্ণমেণ্ট সুষ্ঠুরূপে পরিচালিত ক'রতে পারেন। এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে একথাও প্রমাণিত হ'য়ে যাক যে, এদেশ চিরকাল স্বৈরাচারই মান্‌তে অভ্যস্ত—স্বাধীনতার পথে যাবার এরা উপযুক্ত নয়। আজকে কি বুঝ্‌তে হবে যে, একজন ইস্পাহানী সাহেব বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রীর স্থানে মন্ত্রী হ'লেই বাংলার এই নিদারুণ অন্ন-সমস্যার সমাধান হবে? কোটী কোটী বুভুক্ষিত নরনারী পেট পুরে খেতে পারে? বাংলার লোকের মুখে হাসি ফুটে

উঠ্‌বে? তাদের কান্না থেমে যাবে? তাদের বুক-মুখ সুখ ও সৌভাগ্যে উথ্‌লে উঠ্‌বে? তা যদি হবার হতো বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিসভা ও তাঁদের সমর্থকদের পক্ষ হ'য়ে আমি দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে, আন্তরিকতার সঙ্গে এই আশ্বাস সানন্দে দিতে পারি যে, বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এই মুহূর্ত্তেই পদত্যাগ ক'রতে প্রস্তুত আছেন।

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Where arguments fail, abuses begin.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRAVARTY: সিদ্দিকী সাহেবও বেশ গম্ভীর চালে বক্তৃতা করেছেন—যদিও তার সবটাই দায়িত্বহীন উক্তিতেই ভরা। তিনি কি মনে করেন যে, তিনি যদি আজ বাংলার মস্‌নদে বসবার সুযোগ পান তাহ'লেই বাংলার সমস্ত সমস্যার নিরসন হবে? বাংলার জনসাধারণ খেতে পাবে? Contaiএর লোক আর না খেতে পেয়ে মরবে না? সেখানে এক সংসারের ৭ জন লোক স্বামী-পুত্র-স্ত্রী-কন্যা এক সঙ্গে খাদ্যের অভাবে বিষ খেয়ে মরে গেছে। আজ এই মুহূর্ত্তে খবর পেলাম দিনাজপুর এবং ঢাকা থেকে এই রকম আত্মহত্যার সংবাদ এসেছে। মানুষের সবচেয়ে প্রিয় নিজের প্রাণ! তাকে যখন সে বিসর্জন দিতে যায়, বড় দুঃখেই তা করতে যায়। কিন্তু মরবার এই চাওয়ার মধ্যেই থাকে তার বেঁচে থাক্‌বার অনন্ত আকুতি; সে মরতে চায় মৃত্যুর চাইতেও যন্ত্রণাদায়ক দুঃসময় অবস্থা থেকে পরিত্রাণ পাবার জন্যই। এই চরম অসহায় অবস্থা থেকে মানুষকে বাঁচাবার কথাই আমরা আজ আলোচনা করতে চাই। কিন্তু সিদ্দিকি ও ইস্পাহানী সাহেব এই অবস্থার সুযোগ নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক জুয়া খেলতে চান। জাতির জীবন-মরণ সমস্যা নিয়ে জুয়া খেলতে আমরা দোব না, এটা তাঁরা জেনে রাখুন গভর্ণমেণ্টের পরিকল্পনায় গলদ আছে। আমরা জানি কোথায় গলদ; সেই গলদকে দূর করতে হবে। আমি তাই বলেছিলাম সকলে একসঙ্গে বসুন। সকলের, সমগ্র জাতির সমস্যা মনে ক'রে এর সম্মুখীন হোন, আজ সকলে বসে একসঙ্গে চিন্তা করুন: কি কোরে এই বুভুক্ষ জাতির অস্তিত্বকে রক্ষা করবেন। আজ গভর্ণমেণ্টকে জিজ্ঞাসা করি: চাল গেল কোথায়? তাঁরা বলেছেন ২৫% চাল কম উৎপন্ন হয়েছে, কিন্তু দাম বেড়েছে ৫০০%; এত বাড়্‌ল কেন? Hoarding বন্ধ করাবার জন্য কি ব্যবস্থা করেছেন? Political absconderদের ধরবার জন্য এবং political unrest কমাবার জন্য যে ব্যবস্থা করা আছে সেই ব্যবস্থা কি সর্ব্বনেশে hoarderদের ধরবার জন্য করা যায় না? সেই তৎপরতা অবলম্বন করা হয়েছে কি না জান্‌তে চাই। একটা political absconder সমাজের কতটুকু অন্যায় কর্‌তে পারে? কতটুকু চাঞ্চল্য আন্‌তে পারে? কিন্তু এই সব ঘৃণ্য সমাজদ্রোহী, দেশের শত্রু এদের যেমন ক'রে হোক খুঁজে বের করতে হবে, প্রকাশ্য রাস্তায় এদের মৃত্যুদণ্ড দিতে হবে। রাস্তায় কুকুর দিয়ে খাওয়াতে হবে। এমন শাস্তি দিতে হবে যা কল্পনা করতে এদের প্রাণ শুকিয়ে যাবে—এরা পাগল হয়ে যাবে। এমনি একটা কি দুটো—বাঁকীগুলো এই দেখে শিক্ষা পাবে। আমি মনে করি আজও যে চাল বাংলায় আছে, তা যদি সমানভাবে বেঁটে দেবার ব্যবস্থা করা যায় তবে এ সমস্যার সমাধান হতে পারে; অন্য কোন পথ নাই প্রতিকারের সম্বন্ধে সিদ্দিকী সাহেব যে কথা বলেছেন আমি তা অংশতঃ সমর্থন করি। উড়িষ্যার দিকে চেয়ে থাক্‌লে যে চলবে না সে কথার আমি সমর্থন করি; বিহার আমাদের খাবার দেবে সেজন্য বসে থাক্‌লে চল্‌বে না। যেটুকু চাল আছে এক মুঠো, দুমুঠো হ'লেও সেটা গভর্ণমেণ্ট commandeer কর্‌লেন না কেন? অর্ডিন্যান্স কোরে রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলন বন্ধ করা যায়, অর্ডিন্যান্স কোরে গভর্ণমেণ্ট সমস্ত দেশের বুক থেকে স্বাধীনতার আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে গলা টিপে মারবার

জন্য সমগ্র শক্তি নিয়োগ করা যায়, আর অর্ডিন্যান্স কোরে এক দিনের মধ্যে এটা করতে পারেন না? তাই বলচি প্রতিবাদ করুন শুধু প্রতীকারের জন্য, প্রতিবাদের জন্য প্রতিবাদ করবেন না। পরিষদের মধ্যে যারা বিরুদ্ধ পক্ষে আছেন,—অফিসিয়াল কংগ্রেস এবং মুসলিম লিগ এই দুই দলের মনোভাব বিশ্লেষণ করে দেখলেই আজকের আন্দোলন আলোচনার গতিও বঝতে কোন কষ্ট হবে না। এই দুই দলের মধ্যে কংগ্রেস দলের হাতে ডাক্তারের ছুরি কিন্তু মুসলিম দলের হাতে আছে butcher's knife; ঘাতকের ছুরি হাতে নিয়ে আজকে এ সমস্যার সমাধান করতে কেউই পারবেন না। আজ প্রত্যেকে নিজেকে বাঙালী মনে কোরে জাতীয় জীবনের অচ্ছেদ্য অংশ ভেবে সত্যিকারের মানবিকতার ভাবে উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়ে এবং মানুষের দরদ ও মমতাবোধ নিয়ে আসুন, দেখবেন সমস্যার সমাধান হ'তে পারবে।

আমি hoarding এর একটা উদাহরণ দেব, বীরভূমে ৩॥০ লক্ষ মণ চাল ছিল মজুত। হোসেন কাশেম দাদাভয় কে? তিনি কি কোরে খরিদ করলেন সেই চাল? কি কোরে বেনামায় খরিদ কোরে ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেটের আশ্রয়ে বন্দোবস্ত কোরে সেই চাল বন্ধ কোরে রেখে বাজার চড়িয়ে দেওয়া হলো? সে রহস্য উদ্ঘাটিত ক'রতে হবে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে।

তারপর military consideration : সামরিক প্রয়োজনীয়তা। Casablanca থেকে সাইবিরিয়া পর্য্যন্ত সমস্ত allied front সম্পূর্ণ ভারতবর্ষের উপর নির্ভর করে। কিন্তু ভারতবর্ষে যদি অনাচার হয়, বিক্ষোভ হয়, ভারতবর্ষের মধ্যে যদি অশান্তি মাথাতুলে দাঁড়ায়—আমি সত্যি কোরে বলব যে মিত্রশক্তি সহস্র চেষ্টা কোরেও যুদ্ধে জয় লাভ করতে পারবেন না। ভারতবর্ষকে যদি বন্ধুভাবে গ্রহণ করেন, ভারতবর্ষের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা কোরে, সুখ-দুঃখের দরদী হয়ে যদি চলেন তবেই আজকে যুদ্ধে জয়লাভ করা সম্ভবপর হবে। সৈন্যদের জন্য যেমন-করে-হোক চাল জোগাড় করলেই যুদ্ধ জয়ের পথ সুগম হ'য়ে উঠবে না। জনসাধারণ যদি খেতে না পায় সেখানে বিপ্লব হ'তে বাধ্য। এবং সে বিপ্লব ক'টার বিপ্লব নয়, সে বিপ্লব হবে কোটীর। ২।৪টী লোককে বন্ধ ক'রে রাখলে সে বিপ্লবের গতিবেগ রুদ্ধ করা যাবে না। আমি চোখের সামনে দেখতে পাচ্ছি আসন্ন বিপ্লবের সেই রূপ। বিপ্লবের সেই ভীমা মূর্ত্তি বাংলার বুকের উপর প্রলয় নৃত্য করবে। এতোদিন যে দাবদাহ জাতির অন্তরের মণিকোঠায় গুমরে গুমরে ধূমায়িত হচ্ছিল, আজকে কোন রাজনৈতিক চাহিদায় নয়, ভাবাবেগে নয়, অতি বাস্তব, একান্ত সহজ ও সাবলীল প্রয়োজনে, বাঁচবার ও বাঁচাবার চাহিদায়, প্রাণের তাগিদে সেই ধূমায়িত বহ্নি দাবানলের সৃষ্টি করবে। আর সেই দাবানল শুধু বাংলাকে নয়, সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষকে বিপর্য্যস্ত করবে এবং সমস্ত পৃথিবীকে আঘাত করবে। যুদ্ধের বর্ত্তমান গতি ভারতবর্ষকে কেন্দ্র কোরে চলছে এবং অসন্তুষ্ট ও ক্ষুব্ধ ভারত এই যুদ্ধের সমস্ত রূপ পরিবর্দ্ধিত করে দিতে পারে। ভারতবর্ষের শান্তি আজ প্রয়োজন, মিত্রপক্ষের অস্তিত্বের জন্য। ভারতবর্ষকে মারতে গেলে (মিত্রপক্ষ যেন ভুলে না যান) মিত্রপক্ষের আত্মহত্যার পথ প্রশস্ত হবে মাত্র। বর্ত্তমান মনোভাবের উপর দাঁড়িয়ে ভারতবর্ষ থেকে যুদ্ধে জয়লাভের উপযুক্ত সাহায্য পাওয়া অসম্ভব। কেউ নিজের পেটের আগুন চেপে রেখে, চোখের সামনে পুত্রকন্যার অনাহারে মৃত্যু দেখেও যুদ্ধ জয়ের কল্প নায় অধীর হ'য়ে উঠবে না। কেউ কোন দিন তা করেনি। গত মহাযুদ্ধে জার্ম্মাণীর পরাজয় একথার সাক্ষ্য দেবে। এমন আমেরিকার নিত্য নূতন ধর্ম্মঘট, খাস ইংলণ্ডের অসন্তোষ-বিক্ষুব্ধ কঠোর প্রতিবাদ আমরা জানতে ও শুনতে পাচ্ছি। ইংলণ্ডের লোক, জার্ম্মাণীর লোক, আমেরিকার লোকের পক্ষে যা স্বাভাবিক, ভারতবর্ষের—বাংলার পক্ষেও তা একান্তই স্বাভাবিক। লোক বাঁচবার ও বাঁচাবার

প্রশ্নই সকল প্রশ্নের আদিম প্রশ্ন। সে প্রশ্নের সমাধান করবার জন্য সমগ্র জাতি আজ দাবী জানাচ্ছে। এ দাবী পূরণ ক'রে বৃটীশ গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিজের অস্তিত্ব রক্ষা করবে কি না, তাকে তা ভেবে কর্ত্তব্য স্থির করতে হবে। (cheers)

Maulvi MD. AMIR ALI MIA: মাননীয় স্পীকার সাহেব! বাংলার এই যে দুর্দ্দশা, আজ বাংলার এই যে অবস্থা হয়েছে এ থেকে বেশ বোঝা যাচেচ যে আমাদের গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি এ দিকে একটু দৃষ্টি করেন তাহলেই বাংলার লোক বাঁচতে পারে। আমার রাজসাহী জেলার কথা প্রসঙ্গে বলব যে কেবল সেখানে নয়,—আজ সমস্ত বাংলায় দুর্ভিক্ষের লক্ষণ উপস্থিত। এখন যাতে ধান ৪৲ টাকার কম হয় এবং চাউল ৭৲ টাকা হইতে ৮৲ টাকার বেশী না হয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের সেদিকে লক্ষ্য করা উচিত। কৃষকদের দেনার দায়ে, খাজনার দায়ে, জমিদার-মহাজনের উৎপীড়নে, ধান কেটে আনার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই বিক্রয় করিয়া দিতে বাধ্য হওয়ায় গরীব জনসাধারণ অন্নের অভাবে মারা পড়িতেছে। যাহাতে তাহারা বাঁচে তার বিহিত ব্যবস্থা গভর্ণমেণ্ট সত্বর করবেন এই আমার প্রার্থনা।

আমার আর একটা কথা এই যে প্রত্যেক ডিষ্ট্রীক্টে সাপ্লাই অফিসারগণ যেন গভর্ণমেণ্টের রীতি অনুযায়ী কাজ করেন এবং নিজেদের স্বার্থের দিক থেকে জনসাধারণকে যেন বঞ্চিত না করেন। আমাদের সোণার বাংলায় ধান-চাল সোণার ন্যায় ফলে। সেই ফল যাহাতে গরীবগণ সুবিধা দরে পায় এই প্রজা-গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট আমার সেই আবেদন। আর বাংলার ধান-চাল যেন দেশের এই দুর্দ্দিনে বাংলা থেকে বাহিরে না যায় এবং গরীব কৃষকপ্রজাগণ যাতে সকল প্রকার সাহায্য ও সুবিধা পায় গভর্ণমেণ্ট সে ব্যবস্থা করুন এই তাঁদের নিকট আমার নিবেদন।

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, it has already been arranged that Mr. Walker, as representing the European Group, should be heard.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, we are already quite late and, therefore, I propose that the question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it has already been arranged that Mr. Walker will speak, thereafter Mr. Suhrawardy should be heard and then the Hon'ble the Chief Minister will reply to the debate and then the motions will be put to vote.

Mr. J. R. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my honourable friend, Mr. Hendry, has already expressed the dissatisfaction of this party at Government's handling—I should say, mishandling—of the whole food problem——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not Government's but Governor's.

Mr. J. R. WALKER: I say, Government's.

While admitting the magnitude of the problem and the difficulties attendant on getting supplies from other provinces for which the help of the Government of India is required, it cannot be denied that so far as this province is concerned, the fundamental problem and this Government's responsibility is the supply and distribution of rice. Up to date the Ministers' statements have disclosed no policy with regard to rice. We

do not know whether it is one of control or decontrol. In spite of what we have been told this afternoon, events have proved and it is admitted on all sides that the Government's purchasing scheme has absolutely failed——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Because of the appointment of a European Purchasing Officer.

Mr. J. R. WALKER: We have been told that embargoes are to be introduced. I submit, Sir, embargoes are useless unless deterrent punishments are given against the speculators who will hold on to their stocks until the embargo is lifted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Speculators like Shaw, Wallace & Co. and others.

Mr. J. R. WALKER: I am sure, Sir, that all members of this House and the public outside would like to know what Government intend to do to ensure a free flow of supplies to Calcutta and other deficit areas. Again, I ask, what is the policy? Is it one of control or decontrol? We have heard that reserves have been or are being built up with the object of these reserves being released in the market to regulate the prices. I submit that in normal times it is the object of any business to build up reserves for abnormal times, but I submit that the present is an abnormal time. There is a shortage of supplies and any supplies held by Government, I suggest, should now be thrown on the market. We would like to know what is being done with the purchases that have already been made by Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You want those to be handed over to Messrs. Shaw, Wallace & Co.!

Mr. J. R. WALKER: There is no doubt about the fact that the situation in Calcutta is extremely serious. From different parts of the House we have heard that the price of rice in Calcutta is Rs. 19 per maund, but my own impression is that it is somewhere nearer Rs. 25——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: At which jute mills are buying rice!

Mr. J. R. WALKER: If the jute mills are buying rice, they are buying at a higher rate, but they are supplying it to their workers at Rs. 7-12 per maund.

I would like to know what Government is doing to relieve this situation. We have heard nothing this afternoon to let us know what is being done to increase the number of controlled shops in Calcutta and to increase the already inadequate supplies to the controlled markets. In view of the present situation which I have already described I suggest that the rice which Government has already purchased should be released to relieve the present situation. I submit, Sir, that public confidence has been undermined by the different statements made by different Ministers, rationing schemes unsupported by any definite declaration of policy on this question,

one statement made this afternoon that the shortage of supply is 15 per cent., in another place 23 per cent. and yet at the same time it is admitted that there are no statistics on which these statements can be made. If there is a shortage of supply, then there can be no question of decontrol. If there is full supply, then decontrol can take place as Mr. Khaitan has suggested and free, normal channels can get to work. If there is a shortage and the Ministers can definitely prove that there is shortage, then rationing must be introduced.

I submit, Sir, that it is not the Directorate which is responsible but the Minister in charge and the Ministry for not applying its mind to this problem. It has been suggested on different sides that this is a non-party matter and one on which all sections of the House should co-operate and not censure the Government, but, Sir, if we have no confidence in the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this department and the Ministry's handling of the food problem and if we do not feel that they are able to frame and carry out any policy on this question of food supplies, we have no option but to express our strongest disapproval of the way in which this whole food problem has been handled.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is quite clear that the object of this debate is not a bonâ fide desire on the part of Government to profit by the discussion on the floor of this House, but to take the sting out of the adjournment motion that I moved on the opening day. The frivolous manner in which this debate was opened on behalf of Government, for which, I am glad to say, the Hon'ble Minister has apologised on the floor of this House, and the almost complete absence of Ministers from their seats throughout the debate shows what little regard Government has for the views expressed by the honourable members of this House. After three days of desultory speeches the Hon'ble Minister has read out a long statement making some suggestions whose shortcomings we have little time to expose adequately. He wasted valuable time merely because he did not dare to face the House and admit, as he must, his sins of omission and commission. At long last the day of reckoning has arrived. We do not wish to deal with this problem as a party question. The matter is too important, too grave, too fundamental to be made the plaything of party politics. Around us the dread spectre of unrest and dissatisfaction —I use very moderate expressions—is rearing its head. Mass starvation stalks the land and people are faced with a certain famine if steps bold and drastic are not taken in good time. Aye, Sir, in many places in the rural areas you will get thousands of people to work if they can only get a morsel of food, and, Sir, the Nawab Bahadur dares to treat this problem as a joke. He does not even know he is in charge of this department, in which areas there is an acute shortage and where people are starving for want of rice. He wants information from me. Sir, such utter callousness and incompetence in a person charged with responsibility can lead only to disaster for this hapless land of ours. But the question of responsibility is a different question. We see before us a Government which has proved itself wholly incapable of visualising, comprehending and

tackling the various problems that have confronted us during the last 16 months and which have been aggravated by conditions arising out of the war.

We have a Minister in charge who, to the knowledge of everyone in this House, of everyone in the Government departments, of everyone outside in the country, is wholly incapable of dealing with this problem. We have a Ministry equally incapable, and if this problem is to be treated as a non-party question and with any prospect of an attempt at a solution the House must feel in its innermost conscience that there is no hope for the people of Bengal with this Ministry in power. Has any House ever been treated before as this Government has treated it? Questions are asked on the floor of this House on the food problem; the answers are printed but the Minister cannot attend to these questions and inconvenient supplementaries, for fear of exposing his ignorance which is all too patent and which the House has witnessed today. He pretends an ailment which prevents him from coming to attend the Legislature, but which does not prevent his being seen in the public haunts of Calcutta. I say, Sir, the sooner the House realises its responsibilities and the members the seriousness of the situation, the sooner the members realise their duties to their voters and to the people of the province, the sooner they get rid of the present Cabinet which is sitting as a terrible nightmare on the chest of the province of Bengal, the sooner will they be performing an obvious and primary duty. The sands of time are running fast and the situation is getting desperate. The Ministry hopes to escape its responsibilities by the soft answer, by a plaintive confession of failure and incompetence, by subtly shifting responsibility on the permanent officials and on the Directorate of Civil Supplies. Says the Chief Minister in his budget speech, "Hard things have been said and written regarding the Directorate and in due course the Minister in charge will have an opportunity of replying in detail to the department's critics." What shamelessness is enshrined in these words. The Directorate has bungled, the Directorate will be criticised, the Directorate is responsible and the Minister in charge will come forward as a ministering angel to take the Directorate under his protecting wings and save the Directorate from unjustified criticism. We resent this attitude. We think that a Ministry which can stoop to this is self-condemned, it should not wait for the verdict of the House or the exasperation of the people, it should, while it can do so with dignity, go out of office rather than make a mockery of the constitution which has created it and be bundled out by the force of circumstances. And Mr. Badruddoja, after his vehement criticism of the Ministry, cannot ask us to refrain from censuring this Ministry after their gross dereliction of duty, and he cannot in all conscience support it himself. The vaster the problem, the greater the urgency for joint action, the more justification there is for removing this Ministry from office. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, whose motion I support, has directed the attention of the House to what with admirable restraint and refinement he calls the failure of Government to tackle satisfactorily the various problems relating to food and other necessities of life. Expressions such as criminal neglect, interference with

the permanent officials, encouragement of hoarders and racketeers, association with profiteers and organisers of black markets, issue of permits to non-traders and favourites of Ministers and rampant corruption would have probably expressed more adequately how this problem has been tackled.

To my mind I think the Directorate has done whatever was possible within the limits of its own powers. It was forbidden to take the people into its confidence. It had to work as a purely administrative machinery; the political opponents of the Ministry, namely, the Muslim League, it was charged to keep at arm's length; it was given no direction, no policy to carry out. Who does not know that the problem is vast? World forces are at work. The Government of India itself has floundered, there is no central direction by which one province may come to the rescue of its sister provinces. It is true that all these extra provincial forces are working to complicate the problem here and prevent a satisfactory solution, but much could have been done within the province itself. How can you expect other provinces to give you their surplus or to shorten their belts if they are not satisfied that the Ministry in this province are dealing adequately with our own resources, that you are distributing them properly, that you are putting down black marketing, hoarding and other anti-social activities? Why should they give you of their resources if they are not satisfied that you will distribute them in the right quarters and when this Ministry is a laughing stock in the whole of India. A proper system of supply and distribution was necessary, but if it is to be adequate and useful it is bound to affect not only trade and business but the life and economy of each individual household—more than that—of each individual. Do you expect the Directorate without guidance from an allegedly responsible Ministry to embark on such an all-prevasive policy? No, Sir; it is not by evasive utterances and confessions of failure that the Ministry can divest itself of its responsibilities.

Last session I gave innumerable instances of favouritism and corruption on the part of the Ministry in dealing with the food problem, and I have no desire to go over the ground this session. There has hardly been any change in the previous method and procedure. The favourites still rule; profiteering still flourishes; black marketers are being still patronised; and the people are still being kept at arm's length. The problem with which we are faced is not merely the problem of Calcutta. Already famine conditions are appearing in the rural areas. I have just come from a tour of Noakhali district. Paddy is selling at Rs. 10 per maund and rice at Rs. 15, in Sandwip it is Rs. 18 per maund, and even that is not available. Noakhali has always been a deficit district. This year following several seasons of failure of crops there has again been failure of the aman crop. Burma paddy is not available, Barisal paddy has been stopped. Some relief was afforded by some consignments of Assam rice; even that has now been rigorously stopped. This is the end of *Falgun*. The murmurs are growing in volume, the people have begun to starve; what will happen to them in *Jaista* and *Ashar*, the most difficult months of the year for the agriculturists, heaven alone knows! Food riots have begun, and in

Rajshahi district the police had to resort to firing, six being killed outright. I am not certain whether this will be allowed to be published in the papers, but I have stated this with complete responsibility on the floor of the House if only to awaken to some extent the conscience of the Hon'ble Ministers sitting opposite, and those who are supporting them. But such is the utter want of realisation of facts by this Ministry that Collectors, Special Loan Collectors on extra remuneration, have been appointed to realise agricultural loans from these starving people. The debtors are threatened with certificate procedure and *khas mahal* tenants have been informed by beat of drum that the sunset law will be applied to them if their rents have accumulated to Rs. 20 or over. Control has been established it is true on the import of rice, but without a concomitant scheme of distribution. In Calcutta itself rice is selling at Rs. 25 per maund retail—a price wholly unjustified by the conditions of this province and by the crop condition of India. Sir, for a moment I thought that inasmuch as Government was unable to control effectively and the Ministers were taking undue advantage of the system of control and of permits, it might have been wiser to have got rid of the control system altogether, but I do not think, Sir, that it is now possible particularly after the alarm created in the minds of the people by the recent answer of the Minister for Agriculture regarding the food situation, unless we can import rice and wheat from other provinces where there is a surplus, such as Central Provinces, Orissa and Assam. I cannot see, Sir, what possible advantage Government has gained by announcing that there was a shortage of 23 per cent. in this year's crop without having taken steps to relieve that shortage. I doubt if the figures are correct. The Agriculture Department has no statistics worth the name, but these garbled statistics have merely encouraged hoarders and black marketers. You will find, Sir, in the districts where control has been abolished that prices are rising by leaps and bounds through contracts amongst the *beparis* themselves without any sale in the open market. In Calcutta the Government-controlled shops are not only inadequate but are only a source of irritation to the people. They raise hopes which are not fulfilled, some are even not supplied with rice; others eke out the rice supplied to them in driblets and with deliberate delay and what is saved is sold in the black market. *Purdah* women, mostly Muslim, line up in queues while their men folk have to earn a living, but they have to return disappointed. It is clear, Sir, that there must be more retail shops, say, one for 500 people, and these shops should be properly supervised. But, Sir, to make distribution through these shops possible the problem will have to be tackled on a provincial basis. I do not agree, and I would ask the House not to agree, to the limited responsibility of feeding wartime industries or utility companies or large establishments. Their requirements certainly are very important and cannot be neglected. But this is not enough. Everyone now is in the grip of shortage. The measures taken by Government have not only made the black market possible, but actually made it imperative. Black marketing, hoarding and profiteering must be stopped vigorously and control established 100 per cent. The entire supply must be controlled and rationed. (Cries of

"Hear! hear!" from Opposition benches.) Government has been playing about with its agents. This is not the time to deal adequately with that subject. Mr. Hasan Ispahani has touched upon it and so has Mr. Badruddoja, but I am certain that the new policy of Government to purchase rice through a Food Purchasing Officer without a controlled price and to allow black marketers and profiteers to go scot-free will lead to disaster. I am certain that the Food Purchasing Officer will not get the rice and he will not be able to build up a reserve, although to my knowledge in some places rice is being purchased by Government from the *hâts* and the people are being deprived of it, even though the areas are deficit areas. There is no attempt at present to supply deficit districts and to ascertain surpluses; purchases are attempted at all kinds of odd places and prices are shooting up beyond all control. The classification of buying areas as separate from surplus areas will fail.

Then, Sir, what of the steps taken to encourage agriculturists to grow more food? Something more than the very inadequate distribution of paddy seeds is required. Fallow lands must be taken in hand and handed over without rent for a year or two at least. Credit should be made available to the agriculturist. Processes like certificate procedure and garnishee proceedings must be stopped. Decrees should be suspended and information, still more information, regarding the state of the crop in every union or circle collected and utilised.

I have hardly any time to deal with the other problems. But that of kerosene oil stands out as a burning example of the utter incompetence of this Ministry. The oil companies supply as much as 50 per cent. of the normal consumption, and yet village after village was in darkness and oil was openly sold in the black market at 10 to 12 annas per bottle. There was no direction even given to District Officers to deal with the situation. For months the letters of the Burma Oil Company remained unanswered, while the people shrieked for oil. I fear that the new scheme is likely to be worse than the old. I have already seen the new scheme working at Noakhali. The District Magistrate of the place had been able to evolve some order out of chaos and had appointed agents suggested by the local people who were selling under control. There may have been a few lapses, but the vast majority were getting some oil at controlled prices. Under the new scheme by which the agents will distribute through their old dealers already black marketing has begun in earnest. Controlled price has disappeared entirely. The agents are selling to their *paikars* or *beparis* at Rs. 14 a tin who in their turn sell at Re. 1 per bottle.

But what is the use of multiplying the tale? I have offered some suggestions and there are many more still that one can place at the disposal of this Ministry. We have even offered our co-operation so that a bold all-embracing policy may be adopted. Again I say, what is the use of it all when the foundation itself is so rotten and we have a Ministry so utterly ignorant and incompetent, so utterly out of touch with the people and so hostile to the vast majority of the people! Committees, consultations, advisers are all useless unless the foundation is destroyed and the Ministry thrown out of office.

Before I sit down I make a final appeal to the House. I beg it to realise the very serious nature of the situation. It is not that we intend to make political capital out of the criminal conduct of the Ministry but things have come to such a pass, the province is already so near chaos and disorder, dangers ahead are so considerable, the Ministry is so thoroughly incompetent and worse, that if the honourable members have any regard for the future and better government of this province, if they have any concern for good order, good management of this province, if they have any concern for the very lives of the people, if they wish to save the unhappy masses from starvation and death, then I would appeal to them, particularly those who sit in serried ranks behind the Ministry, to support our motion and record their opinion that this Ministry has definitely failed to do its duty by the people. How long, I beg of the House to consider, are we to bear the dead weight of this Ministry, bankrupt and sterile? How long are personal reasons, the prospect of a few jobs, promises of patronage, benefits already received, being received and due to be received going to keep you from doing your duty by the people? How long are those who say that they want an efficient and reliable administration, an administration that discharges its duties and fulfils its assurances, how long are those who talk of cleanliness in the administration and justice and fair play to all, going to continue to support a Ministry utterly denuded of decent standards and confessedly incompetent? The food problem is one of the major problems of to-day. It affects every one of us. It affects primarily the poor and the masses whose interests must always be paramount, far higher than any other consideration. Let us in considering this problem not be influenced by political sentiments but do our duty by the people and throw out a Government that has proved itself thoroughly incapable of handling the situation and place, if we can, the interests of the people above our own personal and political interests, and then let us sit together and tackle this problem under a decent régime, wedded to the welfare of the masses.

Mr. AFTAB ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I proceed to take part in this discussion I would like to thank you for kindly giving me some time to speak at this fag end of the day.

Sir, from the speeches of the various members it seems to me there is a feeling in the House that industrial labour is getting rice and other supplies. Speaking on behalf of the seamen as I do, I may point out to this House that up till this minute nothing in this direction has been done for the seamen either by the Government or by my friends, the ship-owners. Sir, it is hardly necessary for me to point out what services the Indian seamen are rendering today in connection with the war. I presume, Sir, that I shall not spring any surprise upon the House when I say that today the Indian seamen form the largest single national group in the entire British Mercantile Marine, and this port, the Port of Calcutta, alone has supplied to the extent of 60,000 seamen. Today, three to four thousand of these seamen are waiting for employment in this port, and, Sir, it is much to be regretted that hundreds of these seamen who are rendering such a great war service

are going with one meal a day, some with half-meal a day, and some even are starving! Sir, I am not making any sentimental appeal, but what I am stating is fact. Here, Sir, I cannot help saying that the Government of Bengal have not considered or thought that they have a duty towards the seamen who are taking such a tremendous part in the war. Sir, while we, the members of this Legislature discuss, debate and accuse one another in the name of helping the war efforts of the United Nations, these seamen act and act positively. I may also inform the House that up till now about 2,700 seamen of this port have laid down their lives and about 1,200 have become prisoners of war. And, Sir, these seamen today in this very port are going hungry, and it appears that no one except their Union accepts any responsibility for them. Sir, my friends, the ship-owners, have, of course, obliged me with a copy of the letter which they had written to the Director of Civil Supplies and have concluded the same saying that in view of the large contribution that Indian seamen are making towards war efforts it is of paramount importance that they receive necessary supplies of rice and *dal*. I am sorry to add that though my friends of Clive Street have made necessary arrangements in their other branches of industry for the supply of foodstuffs, particularly rice and *dal*, at a very moderate cost, they have done nothing so far for the seamen. It is true, Sir, that the services of the seamen are being appreciated in various ways, and it is also true that as their humble leader I myself have been commissioned as an Honorary Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Indian Naval Reserve, but it is equally true that a large number of these seamen are starving today and starving in every sense of the term. Sir, I must confess that this helpless position of the seamen in this port, we of the labour side, particularly speaking for myself, cannot stand and can never tolerate. This position of the seamen must be changed: the seamen must be treated as a necessary part of the war: they must be given the fullest assurance of necessary supplies. To overlook the interests of the seamen would be harmful to war efforts. Sir, I heard an honourable member saying that some people were committing suicide. But these seamen who take part in the war and face the deadly bombers and the U-boats will not and cannot commit suicide. They know how to get their requirements, and I trust that they shall soon have the same. Therefore, Sir, I would in all seriousness request the Government to speak out here and now and inform this House what they intend to do regarding the supply of rice and other supplies which I hereby ask for on their behalf.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before I make my submission to the House regarding the various points that have been raised in the course of this debate, I wish to make a point clear to the House to which reference has been made by my friend, Mr. Siddiqi. I find on enquiry that Mr. Porter did not issue any communications to the Press asking them not to publish anything——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It was not Mr. Porter, but Mr. B. G. Rao who issued the instructions.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: ——regarding this debate about food that has been taking place in this House. The fact, Sir, briefly is this: For some time past, there has been appearing in the Press, and also in the course of the speeches made in public, statements which were calculated to cause apprehensions and general panic, and in some cases objection was taken to these statements by military authorities. Some of these statements were so objectionable that they came clearly within the mischief of the Defence of India Rules. Some time ago a letter was issued to the Press conveying a general warning that if such statements were to appear in the Press action might be taken under certain sections of the Defence of India Rules. All that Mr. Porter did was by means of a letter to draw the attention of the Press to this warning and to remind them that if any statements appeared which were likely to cause apprehension and general panic, the maker of the statement or statements would be doing so on his own responsibility. Sir, so far as the Government is concerned they prevented nothing. The Press are entirely at liberty to publish whatsoever they like.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Was there any mention of the debate in the Legislature?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I say yes. The Hon'ble Chief Minister was not informed properly. I will produce the document tomorrow

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: All right, Sir. If such a letter is produced, I will pass orders withdrawing the order that is alleged to have been passed.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The letter under reference says specifically about yesterday's discussion that those speeches should be press-censored.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If my friend can show anything to the contrary, I shall be glad to meet him, and if I find anything objectionable, I promise, I shall have the order withdrawn.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: We are not going to show any letter like that, but we want to have a promise from the Hon'ble Chief Minister that the Press will not be prevented from publishing to-day's debate.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I promise to do so. For the present I am making a statement on the materials placed before me, but I will make an enquiry, and if I find that there has been any attempt at interference with the liberty of the Press that order will be withdrawn.

Coming now to these debates I feel that it should have been easy for me to dispose of the criticisms that have been made had I been free to take part in this discussion with the freedom with which my critics have spoken. Speaking, Sir, as a member of Government I have got many limitations. (Laughter from the Opposition benches.) I have got to see that I do not commit Government unnecessarily to any policy which has not been definitely

decided upon by the Cabinet. Secondly, I have got to see that I do not use any words which may lead to any apprehension in the mind of the people or cause panic, or in other words, may bring me within the mischief of the Defence of India Rules. Sir, I know that there is an anxiety in the minds of the public that not only should the present situation be fully discussed, but that the public should know what steps Government are going to take in order to grapple with the food situation now before them.

Sir, so far as this resolution is concerned, I do not object to that part of the resolution, either the resolution moved by Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali or by my friend, Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, in which they have given certain definite suggestions for the acceptance of the House. Had it not been, Sir, for one or two phrases in the Preamble, which seeks to censure Government, for what has happened in the past, I would have most gladly accepted the resolution as it has been moved. I submit, however, that it is not possible for me to admit the implications of the Preamble for the very simple reason that whatever has happened has happened not because we had no policy, not because we had not done anything to avert the crisis which has come upon us, but that circumstances over which we had no control have brought about a situation which we all deplore, but a situation which was inevitable in the circumstances.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it on account of Governor's interference?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it has been said that there has been a failure on the part of Government to tackle satisfactorily the problem of supply and distribution of foodstuffs. I admit that the situation at the present moment is extremely critical. It is no use trying to convince us that we are passing through a crisis because we are already convinced that Bengal at the present moment is passing through one of not merely a crisis but also a state of things unparalleled in the economic history of the province for a long time past. Facts we cannot ignore, but merely because certain facts exist certain conclusions do not necessarily follow. Suppose, Sir, passing by a highway we find a dead body. There is no use trying to convince anybody that the man is dead, that it is very deplorable that he has been murdered or killed and that his death has brought sorrow and misery to his family. The question is: Who is responsible for the murder? Now, Sir, it is no use again immediately arguing because there is a dead body that the chaukidar of the village should be hanged. You have got to find out, if it can be found out at all, who is responsible for the murder. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: So that future murders may be prevented.) Yes, so that future murders may be prevented.

So far as the present high prices are concerned, we have got to look to certain facts in the face. I understand the anxiety of every one in this House that the situation that has arisen should be properly tackled so that there should be not merely relief but that there may not be any possibility of a similar crisis happening in the future. As regards the present high prices of food, there cannot be the slightest doubt that these high prices are

due to several causes. The obvious cause is the very elementary economic factor, viz., inadequacy of supply to meet the demand. Now, Sir, this question of inadequacy of supply depends again on many factors. Only a few months ago there was the question of the jute acreage that had to be fixed in Bengal. We all know that our friends of the European Party were anxious that the jute acreage should be fixed as high as possible. There was a general cry that the acreage should be fixed as low as possible, possibly as low as 4 annas. Sir, I do not at the present moment criticise the opinions that have been expressed on either side, but we have got to remember that the question of the increase of foodstuffs, of rice and other necessaries of life are interdependent also on the amount of the land under cultivation for such commodities. A large area covered with jute goes directly against our programme of "Grow More Food" Campaign. I am referring to this because while on the one hand there is the anxiety to have more lands for cultivation, there is, on the other, a demand possibly well intentioned and based on very good grounds that the acreage of jute should not be reduced. We have therefore to consider the play and interplay of various forces.

Now, Sir, we all know that so far as Bengal is concerned, the rice we produce is perhaps just sufficient to meet the requirements of the province. My friend Mr. Walker was complaining that the Ministers have been making different statements at different times regarding the percentage of shortage and also some conflicting statements regarding statistics. The reason is obvious. We cannot be absolutely sure so far as statistics are concerned. We have got to go by approximation, and investigations have shown that if there is neither export nor import the quantity of rice that Bengal produces would just be sufficient to meet the requirements of the province. Unfortunately, however, the population of Bengal has shown a very great tendency to increase. Lands for the purposes of cultivation are not available, with the result that with the play of these two forces gradually we are heading towards a position when the rice that we produce in Bengal will not at all be sufficient for the needs of the people. What actually used to happen was briefly this. There are certain countries in the Middle East which prefer Bengal rice to rice from other countries. We therefore used to export rice from Bengal, but we used to make up and more than make up for this export by importing rice from Burma. Now the war broke out towards the end of 1939. For some time after the outbreak of the war we in India did not feel very much that there was such a great war going on in Europe and other countries. It was only when Japan entered the war that we really felt that we were not merely close to the war but that we were actually in the very theatre of the conflict itself. The present Ministry took office in December, 1941, just about the time when Japan declared war, and by February and March Japan had overrun the Phillipine Islands, Malaya, they had occupied Rangoon and overrun Burma. The import of rice into Bengal was suddenly stopped and in the month of April, 1942, we had to carry out the Government of India policy known as the denial policy in various parts of the province. Now, Sir, the position in April was this.

While we had to carry out the denial policy of the Government of India, we were faced with a situation that rice from Burma had been suddenly stopped. Our resources were therefore limited to a large extent, and so far as cultivation was concerned there was severe hindrance in consequence of the denial policy regarding boats and other matters. As a matter of fact, the autumn rice of 1942 fell far short of our expectation, and somehow or other the winter rice also proved insufficient. During the last one year, therefore, we have been faced with this position that while we have not been able to import from Burma, our own production in Bengal has been anything but sufficient.

Now, Sir, it has been said that this Government has no declared policy. The policy which the Government adopted in July, 1942, was a policy of control. Into the details of that I need not enter. But that policy was a policy which was carried out by the Directorate of Supplies, and we did the utmost that could possibly have been done by entrusting this work to trained members of the Indian Civil Service and also to certain non-officials who had risen to positions of eminence in the mercantile world by their intimate knowledge of the condition of affairs in the country. Mr. Suhrawardy has remarked that the Directorate has done its best. If the Directorate has done its best and if in spite of that this crisis has happened, it must be evident that the present state of things is due to matters over which we have no control.

Now, Sir, this policy of control has been carried on for some time. There have been difficulties in the way and one of the most outstanding facts which we cannot ignore has been the manner in which our own people had defied the orders and tried to take advantage of the situation in order to make profits for themselves. It is well known, Sir, that in these circumstances, I mean the circumstances that are now prevailing people sometimes make fortunes out of the misfortunes of other people. (Cries of "hear", "hear" from the Coalition Party.) That is only a human failing and I respectfully submit that no amount of caution or no amount of declaration of policy by the Directorate or otherwise can prevent human beings from taking the fullest advantage of this critical situation to make advantageous profits for themselves. Sir, each time that complaints have been made, the Directorate did their best to hold investigations, to make enquiries and in many cases they were ready to render redress as far as redress was possible. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Are you satisfied?) As a matter of fact I can tell the House not being the Minister in charge I do not think it my duty nor do I think it desirable to pry into the working of that department. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then why give certificates?)

Secondly, Sir, it is obvious that if you set up a Directorate of Supplies for instance and entrust the work to certain permanent officials who have no axe of their own to grind and who may be expected to deal justly and honestly and fairly with the people, it will be criminally unfair if the Ministers were to poke their nose into what they were doing. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is the British businessmen.) It is no question of British or Indian.

There were not merely British officials but Indians also. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: They have no power.) I do not know. They have been given the fullest power. If they do not exercise their power it is not the fault of the Government.

Now, Sir, we made the best selection possible in the selection of personnel of the Directorate.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You made no selection; it was made by somebody else.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Whosoever made the selection, it was the Government selection and therefore I am responsible.

Sir, it has been said that the prices are rising high, that we have done nothing, that we have failed, and that the best that can be done is to throw out this Ministry and instal some other Ministry in its place. Whether that is a solution or not it is not for me to say, but I can say this much that so far as this Ministry is concerned, we have done our best to meet the situation and if we have not been able to tackle the problem in all its aspects, I submit, it has not been due to any lack of efforts on our part. I do not think that I need detain the House much longer. I only wish to make one or two statements which I think the House has a right to expect from me when I am dealing with the present situation.

As regards my friend of the seamen I can only say that we will do our best along with other sections of the people to help them in their difficult position.

Now, Sir, my friend Mr. Walker has put a question whether the policy is of control or decontrol. I had every desire to make an announcement on that point clarifying the position this very night, but for certain reasons I am not in a position to make that statement, but I promise, Sir, that by tomorrow a statement will be issued on behalf of the Government and will be published in the press making it absolutely clear whether it is a policy of control or decontrol, clearing doubts and making a definite statement of policy whether it will henceforth be one of control or decontrol. The question is such that it bristles with difficulties. Even this House is divided on the working of control or decontrol, and in these circumstances when we have to take such a momentous step, we have got to take it very cautiously. The promise that I make is that not later than tomorrow a statement will be made, by tomorrow a statement will be made whether it is to be a policy which can definitely be called either of control or of decontrol.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who will determine this?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We will fix this policy tomorrow in the Cabinet. We will take into consideration all the discussions that have taken place in this House. The decision will be taken by the Government as a whole in the Cabinet tomorrow. We are having a Cabinet meeting simply for this purpose, and I hope by 1 p.m. tomorrow we shall be able to declare unequivocally wheher it is to be a policy of control or decontrol.

We have got to take various factors into consideration and having done that, we will make our statement straightaway not later than tomorrow.

Along with that I have no hesitation in announcing that we will immediately set up a kind of an Advisory Committee presided over by a gentleman well known in this country as a very successful man of business assisted by members taken from various groups of political parties in the country, so that they may be able to advise Government on important matters of policy and other matters that may arise from time to time. I am glad to be able to announce that for the present Advisory Committee we have been able to secure the consent of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker. With Mr. Sarker as President assisted by a strong and representative committee selected from various political sections in this country we hope we will have the advantage of getting most effective advice as regards Government's future policy.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why should you not wait for the advice of that Advisory Committee before you decide on control or decontrol?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact, it is possible that before we issue our statement we will be able to consult not only the President but also the members whom we have got in view. It is for this reason that I make this announcement tonight.

Now, Sir, I am prepared to take into consideration the various sub-clauses in the resolution moved by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and place before the Advisory Council that we are going to set up.

Sir, I have gone through the suggestion that has been made by my friend Dr. Sanyal and I can assure him that so far as exports out of the province are concerned, we shall see that the strongest measures are taken that exports do not take place.

Then, Sir, as regards Dr. Sanyal's suggestion that vigorous steps should be taken to encourage purchase outside, I can tell the House that we have approached the Government of India for the purpose of bringing rice into Bengal. We cannot do so directly and at the present moment I am in a position to give the House this very welcome news that in the very near future we are going to have a sufficient amount of rice imported into the province—it would take some time but not very long—which will enable us to meet the situation satisfactorily.

Sir, I do not know if there is anything else which my friend Dr. Sanyal or any other member of the House would like to ask me. If there is any, I would be prepared to answer such questions.

Sir, there is one point which I forgot to mention. We have already decided that there should be a Minister to be called the Minister of Civil Supplies who will be entrusted solely with the duty of looking after the food problem of this province. We have realised that any Minister burdened with a major portfolio or any portfolio can hardly do justice to the important duties of a Minister holding the portfolio of food.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the new Minister and the Committee proposed be in a position to scrap all the machinery that has been so far set up and have their own machinery if they find it necessary?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is a very pertinent question and I can assure my friend Dr. Sanyal that the object of appointing a sole Minister for Civil Supplies assisted by an Advisory Council is not merely to look into the future but to consider the past as well and, if necessary, they will overhaul the whole machinery and start on a new slate. I can give that assurance to Dr. Sanyal. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Including Distributing Trades Tribunal!) I beg to remind Dr. Sanyal that I personally have spoken to him about the ideas that I have got in my mind and I can assure him that I will carry them out to the full in order that there may not be any cause for complaint in the future. We will give the fullest power to the Minister who will be in charge of Civil Supplies and the Advisory Committee will be in a position to advise the Minister in all important aspects—not merely of policy but also in the matter of execution of that policy.

Now, Sir, if there is any other point on which any honourable member likes to seek information, I shall be prepared to give him an answer.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: What does food-stuff mean?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Certainly rice.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: It does not mean what the financial statement explains?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I take food-stuff to mean rice.

Mr. DEBI PROSAD KHAITAN: May I enquire whether the Advisory Council which the Hon'ble Chief Minister has announced will include representatives of the Chambers of Commerce?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, it will.

Procedure of putting motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The debate is over. Before I put the motions I should like to tell the House the procedure that I shall follow. The House has seen that the original proposal ran in these words : "This Assembly do take into consideration the situation in the province relating to the supply and distribution of food-stuffs, coal, kerosene oil and cloth." The other two resolutions—I call them resolutions—were introduced by way of amendment. Strictly speaking—as I look at it—the original proposal was not a resolution which can be put to the vote of the House, but the amendments may be taken to be independent resolutions and as the last resolution, namely, that moved by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, has the widest scope and is in the nature of a censure motion on the Ministry, I propose to take that up first. If that is defeated, then I propose to take up the next amendment with this

alteration, namely, this Assembly declares its considered opinion that the Government of Bengal should take immediate steps and so forth. That is the procedure that I propose to follow.

The motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan by way of amendment that for the main motion the following be substituted, namely:—

This Assembly is of opinion that Government have failed to tackle satisfactorily the problems of supply and distribution of food-stuff, kerosene oil and other necessities of life and is further of opinion that—

(*a*) Government should take measures to secure adequate supply and equitable distribution of food-stuff and other necessary commodities at reasonable prices;

(*b*) Government should take adequate measures to suppress the black market, hoarding, profiteering and other anti-social activities;

(*c*) Government should take necessary measures to supplement the resources of the province by importing wheat, rice, cloth and other necessities of life;

(*d*) Government should adopt vigorous measures to grow more food within the province and encourage and grant facilities in all possible manner to the agriculturists for this purpose; and

(*e*) Government should co-operate with the principal political parties within the province in the above matters;

was then put and a division called.

(When the House was dividing for the purpose of recording its votes there was evidence of whipping within the Chamber.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. It appears that the honourable members are waiting in the House instead of going direct to the lobbies. I appeal to them all to go straight to the lobbies, for it is desirable that the voting should be finished as soon as possible.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May I draw your attention, Sir, to the canvassing that is going on on the other side? I suggest to you, Sir, to fix a time-limit within which members must leave the Chamber to record their votes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. I allow five minutes' time to the honourable members for going to the lobby to record their votes. After that I will not allow any more time.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: I beg to draw your attention, Sir, to the canvassing that is going on in the House. Mr. Hasan Ali is canvassing.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the five minutes' time given is now over.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not yet over.

(After about one minute Mr. Speaker declared that the division was closed.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I draw your attention to the fact that after your declaration that the division was closed, several members belonging to the other side went to the division lobby and participated in the voting? Even the Chief Minister, Sir, was seen passing through the door to the division lobby after the division was closed.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as the Chief Minister is concerned, I can definitely say that I saw him going to the division lobby long before I declared that the division was closed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Apart from the Chief Minister, Sir, there were many other members including the whips of the Government Party who went to the lobby after the division was closed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali, the statement you are now making is vague. After my declaration that the division was closed, I am sure no vote was recorded by any of the officers of the Assembly Department and consequently that question cannot possibly arise.

The following in the result of the division :—

AYES—78.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali).
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman, Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rasohid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Masud, Kazi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Mymensingh).
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib.
Hamilton, Mr. K. A.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hodge, Mr. H. R.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E.
Jalaluddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Maulvi (Tippera).
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Jogendra Nath.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mullick, Mr. Pulin Behary.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Nazimuddin Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Norton, Mr. H. R.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Sahebe-Alam, Mr. Syed.
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, Mr. H. S.
Smyth Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Tamizuddin Khan, Mr.
Thorman, Mr. C. M.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.
Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi.

NOES—92.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Das, Babu Debendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Khaitan, Mr. Debi Prosad.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. (Bogra).
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukerjea, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Musharruff Hossain, Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi.
Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.
Yousuf Mirza.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 78, and the Noes 92, the motion was lost.

(As soon as the division result was announced there was table-thumping from the Coalition Benches and cries of "shame", "shame" from the Opposition Benches, and counter cries of "shame", "shame" from Coalition Benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: It is extremely painful to me to see that both sides were uttering a word which I on the other day declared to be unparliamentary. I hope this sort of demonstration will never recur in this House.

(Mr. Speaker then placed the motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal before the House.)

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, having regard to the fact that many of these are very useful suggestions, I can announce that except

those minor details I am prepared to accept the operative part of the resolution. viz., the principle laid down in Dr. Sanyal's amendment.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that this Assembly declares its considered opinion that the Government of Bengal should take immediate steps along lines indicated hereunder with a view to mobilise the best talents and resources of the province, irrespective of party considerations, for the purpose of effectively dealing with the situation—

(*i*) a separate Department of Food and Essential Supplies should be set up and placed under the charge of a Minister having no other major portfolio under his care;

(*ii*) the Minister in charge should be actively assisted in his duties by a Central Food and Supplies Committee composed as follows:—

(*a*) eight members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly one each representing the major parties and groups in the Assembly;

(*b*) three members of the Bengal Legislative Council representing different parties;

(*c*) one member representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce;

(*d*) two members representing Indian Commercial Bodies, e.g., Bengal National, Indian, Muslim and Marwari Chambers of Commerce;

(*e*) two experts of whom one must be an Indian; and

(*f*) Minister in charge, as Chairman;

(*iii*) the Principal Officers entrusted with the carrying out of the policy determined by the Minister in charge, in consultation with the Central Food and Supplies Committee, should be Indians having intimate knowledge of the economic conditions and needs of the people of this province;

(*iv*) People's Food Committees should be constituted in every district and in every ward of the city of Calcutta and the Suburban Municipalities with a view to mobilise public co-operation and support for measure to maintain and distribute supplies properly;

(*v*) vigorous steps should be taken to encourage the production of more food in the province and to procure imports from outside; and

(*vi*) exports out of the province should be totally stopped for the present until surplus production is actually attained.

was then, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 9-28 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 11th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 11th March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI), in the Chair, 5 Hon'ble Ministers and 194 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Levy of education cess in districts of Bengal.

***120. Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately for the year 1941-42—

(*a*) the names of the districts in which education cess used to be levied;

(*b*) (1) the total amount collected as education cess from various districts, and (2) the total amount spent for the spread of primary education; and

(*c*) the nature in which the amounts were spent?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ (on behalf of the Minister in charge of the Education Department, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) and (*b*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*c*) The amounts were spent for carrying out the purposes of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, as laid down in section 38 of the Act.

Statement referred to in reply to clauses (i) and (ii) of starred question No. 120.

	Name of the district in which education cess is levied.	Total amount collected as education cess during 1941-42.			Total amount spent for the spread of primary education during 1941-42.		
		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
1.	Chittagong	2,45,912	0	0	3,99,765	0	0
2.	Noakhali	1,91,930	6	0	4,08,257	7	0
3.	Tippera	2,54,652	0	0	7,84,495	0	0
4.	Dacca	3,50,278	11	11	6,52,553	12	7
5.	Mymensingh	5,62,926	0	0	12,52,918	0	0
6.	Faridpur	1,15,946	0	0	2,11,716	0	0
7.	Bakarganj	3,31,096	0	0	3,74,825	0	0
8.	24-Parganas	5,71,916	9	3	3,22,376	6	0
9.	Nadia	2,00,483	4	5	1,30,484	5	3
10.	Murshidabad	1,60,743	0	0	93,644	0	0
11.	Pabna	1,39,938	0	0	2,46,770	6	0
12.	Jalpaiguri	3,91,316	10	7	3,29,744	6	3
13.	Rangpur	1,71,421	8	0	2,48,889	11	0
14.	Bogra	1,90,624	0	0	1,48,768	0	0

(The Hon'ble the Chief Minister rose to answer the questions.)

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, will it not be better if these questions are held over till tomorrow?

Mr. SPEAKER: If you so desire, and if the Chief Minister is also willing to do so, they may be held over for tomorrow.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I might attempt to answer these questions. Because these questions relate to the Education Department I know something about them, and I hope I might be able to answer the supplementaries.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in how many districts, School Boards have already been established?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Speaking from memory, up to now it will be 19 and cess has been imposed in 14 districts.

Establishment of a District School Board at Rajshahi.

***121. KAZI ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether the Rajshahi District Board has adopted a resolution accepting the scheme of the Government for the establishment of District School Board at Rajshahi?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons of delay in giving effect to that resolution?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): The District Board of Rajshahi passed a resolution at its meeting on the 22nd September, 1941, favouring the establishment of a School Board in the district with the simultaneous imposition of education cess. In view of the economic condition of the district then prevailing the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioner were unable to support the resolution of the District Board. Government accepted the views of the local officers at the time and under existing conditions are not inclined to reconsider the matter.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for accepting the officials' view in preference to the view of the District Board?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The reasons are given in the answer. In view of the economic condition of the district then prevailing the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioner were of different opinion. They thought that at the present time due to the economic distress in the district the imposition of the education cess would cause hardship.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the members of the District Boards represent the public and so are in the better know of things than the officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Most certainly. I entirely agree with you.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government tried to ascertain the views of the public in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I may tell at once that so far as the public are concerned, they are most anxious to have not merely District School Boards but also this that cess should be imposed and Primary School Boards should be established. The matter has got to go through the Board of Revenue, and I am very sorry to say that sometimes they are obstructive.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government are prepared to publish the respective views of the District Board and the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioner when there is a divergence of opinion as Government have so very shabbily treated the opinion of the District Board?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not think any useful purpose will be served by publishing the opinion the substance of this being that the District Board very strongly recommended that cess should be imposed.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: No, no.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Why do you say "No, no". I say this from the papers.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: In view of the fact that the public is anxious to have the District School Board and cess, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are prepared to reconsider their decision and establish the Board without delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall mention to the Minister in charge of the Education portfolio the view expressed by the honourable member now.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the economic condition prevailing in the district was bad?

Mr. SPEAKER: You want details? It is said that the economic condition was bad: that is a fact.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that you are entitled to have details.

Admission of students in the First Year Overseer Class of Dacca Engineering School in 1942.

*122. **Mr. JATINDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately the educational qualification and age of the (1) Hindu and (2) Muslim students who applied for admission in the First Year Overseer Class in the Dacca Engineering School in 1942.

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any age limit for admission?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the maximum age for admission?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of (1) Hindu and (2) Muslim students who are admitted in the abovementioned school in the First Year Overseer Class in 1942; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are of (1) Dacca University, (2) Calcutta University, and (3) other Universities.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) A statement, showing the educational qualification and age of the Hindu and Muslim students who applied for admission, is laid on the Library Table.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) Ordinarily 19 years, but when a boy is better qualified or he comes from a backward area, he is taken in even if he is a little over 19.

(*d*) (*i*) Muslim—72.
Hindu—60.
Scheduled Caste—4.
Assam scholars—4.

(*ii*) Dacca Board—39.
Calcutta University—99.
Other Universities—2.

Rules regarding treatment of political security prisoners.

***123. Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the rules regarding the treatment of—

(*i*) political security prisoners; and

(*ii*) political under-trial prisoners in the jails?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when these rules were made; and

(*ii*) by whom?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) I refer the honourable member to the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, and Chapter XXVII of the Bengal Jail Code, seventh edition, copies of which are placed in the Library.

(*b*) The Bengal Security Prisoners Rules were framed in 1940 by the Government of Bengal.

The Bengal Jail Code Rules were first published in 1864. There have been many editions since. The present edition was published in 1937 under the authority of the Government of Bengal.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state under what authority he can refer a member of this House to books lying in the Library which are not accessible either to him or to ourselves? As a matter of fact, Sir, the Security Prisoners' Rules could not be had in the Library.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: The Hon'ble Minister has referred us to some book which he says will be found in the Library. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister what justification he has to refer us to books which may or may not be in the Library and which may be out to members of the Assembly or of the Council and what justification he has to refer members to these books.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as I am aware, generally when any book is referred to or any publication is referred to, it is stated that it may be found in the Library Table. That is the usual practice as far as I know prevailing in this House. If your complaint is that questions should not be answered in this way, that is a complaint which I take note of and I shall see if your complaint is justified or not and anything can be done in the matter.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With due deference may I point out, Sir, that a similar question was put by me as well as by some other members and we were referred to the Bengal Security Prisoners' Rules of 1940, and we were told that the book was in the Library. But as a matter of fact the book was not in the Library: the Hon'ble the Chief Minister knows it. The question has been held over twice and it has not yet been fully answered.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will look into the matter.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, have since been revised by the present Ministry?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There have been certain amendments. As I said the other day, the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules will be published in the Gazette and if any suggestions are made they will be considered and incorporated in the Rules.

Rules for political prisoners.

***124. Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the latest rules for political prisoners showing separately those for—

(*i*) security prisoners, (*ii*) detenus under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules, (*iii*) convicts placed under different divisions, and (*iv*) undertrials, particularly those relating to—

(1) Classification, (2) permission to use own clothes, (3) bedding, (4) interviews, (5) letters, (6) allowances for food,

(7) washing soap, (8) toilet including hair oil, (9) tooth-brush and paste and soap, (10) clothes for summer and winter, and (11) food from outside?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the present policy of Government regarding—

(*i*) the grant of family allowances to security prisoners or detenus who had been sole earning members of their families; and

(*ii*) the grant of permission and necessary facilities to political prisoners (convicted, undertrial and security prisoners or detenus) to sit for University Examinations?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of—

(*i*) the security prisoners and detenus who have applied for family allowances;

(*ii*) the number of them that have been granted the same; and

(*iii*) the number of them that have been granted family allowances exceeding Rs.25, Rs.50, and Rs.100 per month.

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any amounts as family allowances have been granted to the members of the Legislature who are now security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) As regards security prisoners I refer the honourable member to the relevant provisions of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, a copy of which is placed in the Library.

As regards detenus under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules, convicts and undertrials, I refer the honourable member to Government Notification No. 84-H.J., dated the 11th January, 1940 (published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 25th January, 1940), and the relevant rules of the Bengal Jail Code, Volume I, seventh edition, a copy of which is also in the Library.

(*b*) (*i*) I refer the honourable member to the Government communique, dated the 12th September, 1942, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table.

(*ii*) I refer the honourable member to rule 15 of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules and Rule 654 of the Bengal Jail Code.

(*c*) (*i*) 756.

(*ii*) 160.

(*iii*) 32, 3, nil.

(*d*) No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the first answer regarding the applicability of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules in the matter of classification, etc., will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken to see that all jails follow the same standard in applying the Rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware if there is any difference.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that in Barisal Jail—and this matter was brought to his personal knowledge—the jail authorities denied fresh fruits and fruits from outside being supplied to the prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that was so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that in no other jail including the Presidency and the Central Jails this prevention is imposed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware, but if the honourable member wants me to look into the matter, I will do so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I want to say, Sir, that I do not like to ask questions beyond the Hon'ble Chief Minister's own personal knowledge.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I wanted to know if he is personally aware that great discrimination was being exercised in the Barisal Jail in the matter of supply of food, supply of clothings, permission for interviews, permission for writing letters and other conveniences provided under the Security Prisoners' Rules? Is he aware that in the Barisal Jail complaints have been made to Government drawing attention to serious discrepancies being exercised in regard to these privileges although the Security Prisoners Rules do provide for them?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have already answered in the affirmative. Yes, it was brought to my notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if any action has been taken since the matter came to his notice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, I asked the department to look into the matter. I think steps have been taken, but I do not know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*)(*i*) relating to grant of family allowances to security prisoners, is Government aware that the communique referred to of the 12th September, 1942, is not being followed and so far earning members of families which are now practically in destitute condition have not been granted family allowances although this is in the communique and is much trumpeted on the floor of the House?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have received memorials in 4 or 5 cases to this effect and the matter is being enquired into. I do not know what has happened, but I think the honourable member is correct in his statement of facts.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*)(*iii*), which relates to the amount of grants so far sanctioned, that 32 persons have been

given more than Rs. 25, 3 more than Rs. 50 and nobody above Rs. 100, will the Hon'ble Minister please state if out of this calculation one has to presume that all the rest, namely, 160—35 or 125 get less than Rs. 25?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is not correct because I remember cases in which they have got as much as Rs. 75.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, it is stated here. Three persons get above Rs. 50, that is including Rs. 75 and only one person gets Rs. 75.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: One or two, I do not know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we enquire on what standard the actual amount is determined? Is it on the basis of the previous earnings of the member interned or on the basis of the calculated cost of maintenance of the family that he has left over, or what is the basis?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The same reasons do not hold good in each case. The matter is sent down for enquiry and report and the report recommends to Government certain amounts on a consideration of many of these factors, such as, whether he is the sole earning member or he is a member whose detention has affected the income of the family and various other things. It is very difficult for me to mention them offhand. There is not one rule for every case but different rules for different cases.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that great hardship is experienced by almost every family of detenus because of the extremely meagre allowance that is allowed in the case of those where allowance has been given?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is so in consequence of the present economic conditions. The rates that have been granted so far have not proved very satisfactory and in many cases we have increased the allowance that had been granted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Has the Government considered the desirability of including the dearness allowance or of considering the present scale of prices of foodstuffs in fixing the allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say exactly about dearness allowance, but some such relief measure is under consideration.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state why is it that out of 756 applications so far received only 160 have been disposed of? What has happened to the rest and why such delay takes place?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The reason is that in many cases the reports that come appear to me to be extremely perfunctory and I send down the reports for further enquiry. This takes some time. I am very sorry that the reports that come in the first instance are not at all satisfactory, they are very perfunctory.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of speeding up the disposal of applications for family allowance and of seeing that actual relief is given when allowance is granted and not mere paper relief?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL Huq: I shall most gladly bear this in mind.

Proposal for Organising Home Guards in Bengal.

***125. Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what is the present position of the proposal for organising Home Guards in Bengal, specially for the rural areas?

(*b*) Was any scheme for Home Guards drawn up after consultation with certain leaders of public opinion, including the President of the Indian National Congress?

(*c*) Was any scheme finally prepared and approved by the Council of Ministers, Bengal?

(*d*) If the answers to (*b*) and (*c*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy each of the said schemes?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the reasons for the delay in or postponement of the organisation of Home Guards in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) I refer the honourable member to—

(*i*) a statement which I issued to the Press on the 29th April, 1942.

(*ii*) my speech in this House at the commencement of the last session which will be found at pages 42-43 of the Assembly Proceedings, Volume LXIII, No. I.

(*iii*) a statement of progress recently published in the press; a copy of *Bengal Weekly* containing this, dated the 15th February, 1943, is placed in the Library.

(*b*) to (*d*) Leaders of political parties including the President of the Congress were consulted during the early part of last year and a scheme was drawn up thereafter which is still under consideration of Government.

(*e*) In view of the answers given, does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The statement was sent to the press but here the practice has hitherto been either to place it on the Library Table or actually to append it to the answer concerned. I cannot be requested to look up the press and find out where it lies.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that ought not to be done.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I think in that case this question may be held over for the present.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Appointment of Chairman of the Bankura District Board.

***126. Khan Bahadur Dr. SYED MOHAMMED SIDDIQUE:** *(a)* Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether Government are contemplating appointment of the present Sadar Subdivisional Officer to the Chairmanship of the Bankura District Board?

(b) If the answer to *(a)* is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of a feeling existing amongst the inhabitants of Vishnupur subdivision of Bankura district over the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): No.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the administration of the District Board of Bankura is being run when there is no Chairman?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is a Vice-Chairman.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state that the last Chairman was removed by the present Ministry from his office as Chairman because he was a stalwart Muslim Leaguer?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I wish my friend had not put this question. The Chairman was removed because of his persistent neglect of duty and incompetence.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of the fact that the Vice-Chairman is not empowered under the rules to sanction travelling allowances and to perform other duties including prosecution under the Food Adulteration Act?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It may be so, but no such difficulty has been reported to me as yet so far as the Bankura District Board is concerned.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this relates to the first part of the question or the second part or both?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Both.

"Grow More Food" campaign.

***127. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state the measures so far taken by Government to implement the "Grow More Food" campaign inaugurated by the Government of India?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there has been a fall in acreage under the cultivation of rice in Bengal this year in spite of "Grow More Food Campaign"?

(*c*) Are the Government considering the desirability—

(*i*) of carrying on the propaganda work in the rural centres, and

(*ii*) of supplying manures and better seeds to the cultivators either free of all charge or at nominal prices?

MINISTER in charge of the ACRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) Schemes were undertaken for securing increased areas under Departmental recommendations, e.g., paddy, pulses, oilseed, potatoes and English vegetables and considerable extensions were effected. Intensive propaganda by posters, slogans, leaflets, talks in village hâts was carried out by all Government machineries. In practically every area in the Province the drive for more food was intensified, more particularly in areas where lands were released from jute. Agricultural loans to the amount of over 7 lakhs of rupees have been distributed to further the cause of increased food production.

(*b*) No. Only compared with the preceding season (1941-42), there was a fall in acreage but the acreage is considerably higher than in any of the preceding 8 years since 1933-34.

(*c*) Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*), namely, that schemes were undertaken for securing increased areas under departmental recommendations, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state respectively the expansions effected in the cultivation of the commodities mentioned, namely, paddy, pulses, oil-seeds, etc., under each head, the acreage that was previously under cultivation and the acreage that followed after the introduction of the "grow more food" campaign?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that contrary to what is stated that considerable extensions were effected the acreage under paddy has actually decreased compared to that of the previous year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: My reply is, no, but only compared with the preceding season (1941-42) there was a fall in acreage but the acreage is considerably higher than any of the preceding eight years?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that potato seeds which were supplied for the next potato cultivation was found to be rotten and that therefore they could not be utilised?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Not the entire quantity but some of them was rotten.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: What was the loss incurred by Government on account of the purchase of rotten potato seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have no information.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to the fall in acreage in answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that that fall is due to the fact that cultivators in rural areas could not be properly supplied with seeds for cultivation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, Sir, It is not so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the campaign of intensive propaganda carried on by posters, slogans, leaflets, talks in village hâts, etc., will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of money spent under each of these respective heads and the agency or agencies through which the amounts have been spent?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of any detail by which one can get an idea whether the amount has been properly spent or not? Has he seen the file? Has he enquired into the question? Has he enquired what is happening with this money?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I have already stated, without notice I can say nothing.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Without notice the Hon'ble Minister cannot say whether he has seen the file or not!

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, it is no use quarrelling with the Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that no attempt has yet been made to bring into cultivation culturable but fallow lands?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes; attempts have been made and about one lakh of acres has been brought under cultivation by irrigation in the districts of Bankura and Birbhum and recently we are going to adopt another scheme for boring 100 wells for irrigation in connection with the cultivation of *rabi* crops.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the reason for the fall in acreage this year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: In the current year in comparison to last year there was a fall which was due to the fact that due to drought some lands could not be brought under cultivation and some lands which were to be brought under cultivation could not be cultivated on account of heavy rains.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that most of the paddy seeds which were supplied were bad and were used for consumption instead of for sowing?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Whether they used it for consumption or not I cannot say. I have not received any complaints whatsoever as to whether it was bad or not.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that on account of the high prices of foodstuffs now prevailing agriculturists are making the best possible attempts to improve cultivation and increasing the acreage under cultivation in spite of Government propaganda which has been completely wasteful?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not admit that Government propaganda was completely wasteful but I believe that every cultivator has felt that he should bring every acre of his land under cultivation.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the number of acres by which the acreage fell in the year under consideration on account of the "Grow More Food" campaign of Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not admit that this fall was due to the propaganda of Government to grow more food. As regards the actual fall in acreage I ask for notice.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to the admission just now made that rotten potatoes were distributed, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action Government contemplate to take by way of giving relief to the cultivators for exemption from payment of the price of the rotten potato seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have not said that rotten potatoes were supplied. We have heard that the potatoes became rotten while on transit. Personally I have received no petition asking the Government to compensate for any loss.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state what was the agency through which the paddy seeds were bought and supplied? I would like to know the name of the agent.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Khan Sahib Waheeduzzaman, who has just been elected with the support of the Coalition Party, was not one of the agents for buying and supplying paddy seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already submitted that the papers before me do not show the names of any contractors. Without notice I cannot supply the information. I was not in charge at the time. So from my personal knowledge I cannot say anything.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that petitions for relief are sent to the District Officials and they taboo them and never forward them to the Minister?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the campaign is still being carried on, and, if so, whether the distribution of *aus* seeds has already commenced?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, the campaign is still going on most vigorously. As for the distribution of *aus* seeds, I have already asked the Director of Agriculture to supply seeds as demanded by different District Officers. Now, I have received the report that *aus* paddy seeds are not available because in most of the districts in North Bengal the *aus* crop failed entirely and the small quantity of *aus* paddy which they have got they are consuming. So it is very difficult for me to get *aus* seeds for the current year. However, the department has been asked and is doing its best to secure and procure from any place, and whatever quantity will be available will be distributed.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the Government applied its mind to this question, *viz.*, the necessity of supplying *aus* seeds to the cultivators?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: For myself as soon as I took over charge of this department, *i.e.*, in the beginning of February, within a day or two I had a discussion with the Director of Agriculture and I told him that the season for sowing *aus* seeds was coming and asked him to make arrangements. Recently I learnt that seeds are not available in large quantities, but whatever quantity is available is going to be distributed.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in some parts of Bengal the *aus* paddy has already been sown?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Might be.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what amount of money has been set apart for buying *aus* paddy seeds in the current year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: It is not a question of money. Whatever amount is required for distribution of *aus* seeds for the purpose of "Grow More Food" campaign, Government will not grudge to spend it.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Agriculture Department has said that they are not able to buy paddy seeds for want of shortage as well as for want of money?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know. If my honourable friend had any personal talk with the Director I do not know about that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the total quantity the Director of Agriculture has so far purchased and proposes to purchase in the current season, and he proposes to distribute, and at what price?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have called for figures from him and expect to get them in two or three days.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether, in addition to English vegetable seeds, agriculturists are being supplied with seeds of country vegetables?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As far as my knowledge goes, country vegetable seeds are available everywhere, in every district and in every village. I do not think that cultivators would suffer for want of country vegetable seeds, and if English seeds are required and the agriculturists have not got them, we supply them.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Does the Hon'ble Minister know that there are better varieties of Indian vegetables in some parts of the country than in others? For example, *data*—Katwa *data*—is best in West Bengal and not in East Bengal.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: If East Bengal wants Katwa *data*, Government will be prepared to supply seeds of the same. I do not know whether the soil of East Bengal will be suitable for Katwa *data*.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when was the sum mentioned in answer (*a*) distributed as agricultural loan?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Last year

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to mention the districts which were the recipients of this loan?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Most of the districts of Bengal.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if this year also Government have established any agency in order to buy paddy seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No agency has yet been established within my knowledge.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Director of Agriculture himself is an illusive person, and whether it is a fact that he cannot be met anywhere in Bengal when required?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know whether he is an illusive person or not. If my friend wants to meet him he can do so at Dacca.

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Jute Advisory Board.

37. Maulvi MD. ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the dates fixed by the Government for submission of the advice of the Jute Advisory Board to the Government with respect to the jute quota of 1941, 1942 and 1943;

(*b*) the dates of the meetings of the Jute Advisory Board for the determination of jute quota of 1941 and 1942;

(*c*) the dates of the communication of the decision of the Board to the Government for the years 1941 and 1942;

(*d*) the dates of the meetings of the Jute Advisory Board for the determination of the jute quota of 1943;

(*e*) the date of communication of the decision of the Board to the Government; and

(*f*) the dates of the publication of the notification under section 9 of the Jute Regulation Act, 1940, embodying therein the decision of the Government with respect to the jute quota of 1941, 1942 and 1943?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No. 37.

The various dates required are given below in tabular form:—

	For the crop of—		
	1941.	1942.	1943.
Meeting of Advisory Board	23rd September, 1940.	23rd September, 1941.	6th October, 1942.
Date for communication of decision.	30th September, 1940.	24th September, 1941.	7th October, 1942.
Decision communicated to Government.	23rd September, 1940.	23rd September, 1941.	Ditto.
Date of notification of Government's decision in Gazette.	26th September, 1940.	1st December, 1941.	12th February, 1943.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for the unusual delay in publishing the gazette notification regarding the Government decision after they had received a communication from the Advisory Board in the year 1943?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: After we received the report from the Advisory Board, the matter was under the consideration of the Government of Bengal as well as the Central Government as well as His Majesty's Government in England. There were great controversies over the figures supplied by the Government of Bengal, Central Government and His Majesty's Government. The matters were repeatedly referred to the Central Government for its opinion as well as His Majesty's Government in England. That took about two months' time, and in the meantime we had several Cabinet meetings and we could not come to a decision on account of these anomalies in the different reports. Ultimately when the Government of India agreed with the Government of Bengal, we came to this decision.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the recommendation of the Advisory Committee with reference to the fixation of acreage?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The majority view was four annas and there was another view—one-third.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state clearly why then eight annas of the recorded land was fixed this year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, after taking the figures and statistics of preceding years, the Government thought that in the coming year for annual consumption within India as well as outside India, we required eighty-five lakhs of bales normally, and that quantity could be grown on an eight annas acreage and not on less. In consideration of the favourable turn the war has taken now, we expect that we will receive greater facilities for transport, and we hope and believe that America and other countries will also place orders with the Government of Bengal for jute. So there will be a greater demand for jute in the coming year and as I have already submitted on less than 8 annas acreage we cannot expect these 85 lakhs of bales. So, considering all these facts this has been adopted by the Government of Bengal this year. Of course this 8 annas is the maximum fixed by Government. It does not mean that each and every cultivator would be compelled to grow jute on 8 annas acreage. If he likes he need not grow jute at all. Nobody will enforce him and nobody will take him to task for that. If he likes he can go to the extent of 8 annas acreage, or he can grow jute on 4 annas or even 3 annas. At the same time, we are appealing to the people, we are making vigorous propaganda asking them to grow more food crop than jute. Instead of wasting time by putting questions I would request my honourable friends, members of this House as also of the other House, to take up this matter with the people vigorously.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a reply to the question or a speech?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Hon'ble Minister ought not to have said all that.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the basis of his information that America and other foreign countries will place heavy orders for jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Our advisers say that and we accept that.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state clearly whether the jute millowners and other organisations dealing with jute put any pressure upon Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No; far from that. They did not put any pressure. As I have already said, 8 annas is the maximum A cultivator can grow jute on 4 annas acreage or if he likes he may not grow jute at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are cross-examining your own Minister? (Laughter.)

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether 8 annas acreage is consistent with the "Grow More Food" campaign?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a question of opinion.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Indian Jute Mills Association considered that 10 annas was necessary for jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes. The Indian Jute Mills Association insisted on 12 annas and then they came down to 10 annas, but we did not accept that.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the recommendation of the members of the Jute Mills Association on the Jute Advisory Committee?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: There also they pressed for 10 annas I think.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Did not the Hon'ble Minister state at an earlier stage that there were two views expressed by the Association, one being that the quota should be 4 annas and the other being that the quota should be one-third? There was no mention of 10 annas.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That relates to the Indian members. Some said 4 annas and some said 5 annas.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the decision of an 8 annas quota was taken in Calcutta or imposed upon the Bengal Government by the Government of India?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The decision was taken in Calcutta by the Bengal Government and not under any pressure or influence from the Government of India. Rather the Government of India gave us a free hand in the matter.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what do the Government expect to be the surplus for the current year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Off-hand I cannot say.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the visit of a Minister and the Chairman of a certain Jute Association to Delhi was intended for fixation of the acreage or for some other object?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is too vague a question.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I purposely avoided the mentioning of names.

Mr. SPEAKER: You may state the approximate time or something like that when a certain Minister or the Minister in charge of the department went Otherwise it is too vague.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, the Minister and the Chairman of a Jute Association visited Delhi in connection with the jute problem of Bengal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that a fact?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: What I want to know is whether it was to fix the acreage or for some other aspect of the jute problem. Why did they go to Delhi?

Mr. SPEAKER: You have assumed that a certain Minister and the Chairman of a certain Jute Mill Association went to Delhi in connection with something relating to jute, and your question then is whether it was for fixation of acreage or for some other purpose. First put the first part of the question, make it a little bit definite and then you can put the second part.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You can put it in the best way you like it, Sir,—the first part of the question please.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I heard that the then Minister in charge of Agriculture went to Delhi, but for what purpose I do not know.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the estimate of 85 lakhs of bales for an 8 annas acreage includes any increased demand which would arise in the event of termination of the war?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No; ordinary consumption.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has taken legal opinion as to the feasibility of prosecuting these gentlemen who want to have more acreage for jute when the people are dying for want of rice?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the recommendation of the Jute Advisory Committee on this matter?

Mr. SPEAKER: That has been answered several times.

Food situation.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Sir, I want to make a small submission. Yesterday evening the Chief Minister was pleased to say to this House that he would, on behalf of Government, issue a statement——

Held-over questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Let us finish something else and then you can make your submission.

It is known to this House that a large number of questions to be answered by the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca have been held over. We were assured that those questions would be answered at the rate of ten questions on each day. Today also the Nawab Bahadur is absent. (A VOICE: Is he ill?) I do not know that, but I would like to know from the Chief Minister what he proposes to do with regard to those questions—whether these questions should be held over for another length of time or some other Minister would answer those questions.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Today, Sir, he was suddenly taken ill, and although I have got the papers here I have not been able to make any arrangement. From tomorrow, Sir, some arrangement will be made, but the accumulation is so heavy that it requires the attention of one Minister fully.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Unfortunately, the formality of Ministers continues. The Chief Minister will, I hope, follow the parliamentary practice of another Minister or perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary answering the questions for the Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: From tomorrow some arrangement will be made.

Food situation.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Sir, the Chief Minister was pleased to assure the House yesterday that he would by noon today (A VOICE: By 1 p.m. today)—yes, by 1 p.m. today, issue a statement on behalf of his Government on the policy that the Government of Bengal hope to adopt in the matter of food shortage in the province. Now, Sir, I went to the News Agency 20 minutes before and enquired of them whether they had received any such statement from the Chief Minister and I was told that no statement had come. Is this, Sir, one of the many assurances that the Chief Minister has been giving to the House from day to day?

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be better to enquire of the Chief Minister.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Yes, Sir, I am enquiring of him through you.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I made that statement yesterday, but although I gave that assurance I did not get the votes of my honourable friends. Nevertheless I have made good my promise. I did not say that I would make a statement to the House. I said that a decision would be arrived at by noon today and published. A decision has been arrived at and a statement has been sent to the Press by the Government.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

27—Administration of Justice.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 75,12,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice".

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the persecution of Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors belonging to the Muslim League. I raise this question not because we have been intimidated by Government nor because our position has been weakened in any way by the systematic manner in which all Muslim Leaguers are being oppressed, harassed and persecuted in this province. It is not also our intention to seek Government patronage or favour, far be it from our mind. We on the other hand welcome the wrath of Government because it only serves to strengthen our morale and temper our steel. Therefore, no amount of oppression can weaken our allegiance to the only national organisation which can deliver the goods to the Muslims of this vast sub-continent. No amount of temptation or allurement can make us swerve an inch from the path we have chosen. If in this process we are called upon to make any sacrifice of position, of power, of office, or of life itself, we are fully prepared to make that most cheerfully. The purport of my motion, therefore, is to raise a

very important constitutional and political issue. Under the Government of India Act, Public Prosecutors and Government Pleaders have been permitted to offer themselves for elections to and become members of the Legislature and thus they retain the non-official character of these posts. It is therefore natural for Public Prosecutors and Government Pleaders to affiliate themselves to some political party or other. In the circumstances, decency and fairness demand that such persons should be immune from harassment and persecution for their political allegiance or belief. But the present Ministry in complete disregard of such decency and scruple has been utilising its power and position in persecuting such Government Pleaders, Public Prosecutors and other pleaders in the panel of Assistant Public Prosecutors as owe allegiance to the Muslim League.

Sir, I shall cite a few instances in support of my case. Mr. Abdul Majid Chaudhury, Government Pleader of Lakshmipur, has been removed from office because he owes allegiance to the Muslim League and abstained from rendering his services by refusing to organise a reception for the Ministers during their visit to the district.

Then, Sir, I shall refer to the case of Mr. Kader Buksh, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, who has been re-elected today. In Balurghat, acts of violence were committed after the 8th of August resolution and hundreds of persons were arrested and investigation went on for months. Mr. Kader Buksh who was in charge as Public Prosecutor studied the cases and recommended the charge-sheets to be drawn up. Several persons were accordingly sent up for trial by Special Magistrate. And then to the surprise of everybody it was found that Government had superseded his claim and made over the cases to a much junior Public Prosecutor of a different district who had been appointed on a fee of Rs. 75 per diem whereas Mr. Kader Buksh had been given a fee of Rs. 25 per diem.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Is he of Bogra?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Is he a relation of yours?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, he is a relation of the Nawab Bahadur, of Dacca.

Sir, the cases are expected to last for several months, for at least six months. Previously Mr. Kader Buksh had conducted all cases under the Defence of India Rules, every one of which had ended in conviction. There was therefore no reason for removing Mr. Kader Buksh apart from the fact that he belonged to the Muslim League Parliamentary Party.

Sir, another case is of Khan Bahadur Abdul Goffran, Public Prosecutor of Noakhali. He was served with a notice to show cause why he should not be removed from office. His offence was that he simply abstained from attending a *darbar* held by the Ministers during their visit to that district. This matter was strongly agitated upon and fortunately further proceedings were dropped.

Then I come to my own district. Here the Public Prosecutor has taken leave for several months. Two seniormost pleaders on the panel are Muslim Leaguers. It is therefore surprising that the Government Pleader has been appointed to officiate as Public Prosecutor in addition to his own duties in supersession of the claims of the Assistant Public Prosecutors both of whom had previously very successfully held charge. Here the Government Pleader has had no practice in criminal cases and yet in order to keep the Muslim League lawyers out Government has appointed a lawyer with only civil practice to conduct criminal cases.

Sir, all these instances go to show that Government has interfered with the constitutional rights of the people for the Government of India Act never contemplated penalising a non-official lawyer for his political belief and allegiance.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the deterioration in the respect commanded by the High Court Judges in the Province of Bengal due to various reasons.

Sir, I have a certain amount of hesitation in moving this motion. That is for obvious reasons. We who have had from our early boyhood some little training to respect law consider the rule of law to be in such a high pedestal that it is not easily that we are compelled to challenge the position of the highest judicial institution in the province. In spite of that hesitation, I feel it my public duty, Sir, to bring to the notice of Government how the public generally are feeling now about the highest Court of Judicature in this Province of Bengal, and I hope, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister in charge will take due notice of the same.

Sir, there was a time when the High Court of Judicature in the Province of Bengal was held in the highest esteem not only in the whole of India but in the whole of the world where English Jurisprudence was followed. There were also eminent Judges like Sir Lawrence Jenkins and Sir Lancelot Sanderson who had kept up the traditions of their eminent predecessors and even within our living memory we remember how High Court Judges disdained even to accept tea party invitations from officials of Government—even from the Governor of Bengal. They maintained the tradition of absolute impartiality and complete freedom from influence of the Executive. They studied law and applied legal maxims to the benefit of the people irrespective of their colour, their community or their political feelings and inclinations and we have had eminent Judges delivering judgments that have for generations to come remained as the Magna Carta of the people. But in spite of all this, Sir, today, I humbly submit, the position of the High Court in Calcutta has gone down very low in the esteem of the people and it has

gone down due to various reasons. It is not for me to state specifically instances of maladministration in the High Court because possibly that would neither be desirable nor in keeping with the dignity of this House but, Sir, I can, with all the emphasis that I can command, state definitely that it is the general feeling all over Bengal that the High Court today stands very much lower in the esteem of the people than in what the High Court of the past used to stand. Sir, from the time the administration was taken over by the present Chief Justice this has been the case and why has it been so? As I have been able to gather, Sir, there are three important reasons. The first is that in the selection of Judges considerations other than absolute efficiency do come in. As you may be aware, we have got in the selection of Judges two panels from which selections are made. One is selections from the local Bar, either from the Bar Association or the Bar Library, and the other is throgh the import of Judges from abroad. For the last few years, Sir, we have noticed that invariably the selection from the Bar has yielded very good results. We have now in the High Court eminent Bengali Judges like Mr. Justice Roopendra Coomar Mitter, Mr. Justice Charu Chandra Biswas, Mr. Justice Radha Binode Pal,——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. It would be better, Dr. Sanyal, not to name High Court Judges in our debates.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then, Sir, there were eminent Muhammadan Judges like Mr. Justice Ameer Ali and Mr. Justice Nasim Ali.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you are again mentioning the names of the High Court Judges which you cannot do. For the purpose of this discussion it is not at all necessary to name any of the High Court Judges.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, there is no denying the fact that there are eminent Hindu and Muslim Judges who have been selected from the panel of the Bar Association or from the Bar Library but those who have been brought down from the home of the Britishers have invariably been found wanting, and that is a matter which has got to be seriously looked into. It may be that the right type of men are not coming from England, and if that is so, it is no use trying to get High Court Judges imported from England any more and it is time that the present policy should be entirely changed.

The second reason for the deterioration, as I find, is that the present Chief Justice does not take into confidence the three different sections of the legal profession, namely, the Bar Library, the Bar Association and the Solicitors' Association in important matters of administration. In fact, Sir, the present Chief Justice sometimes overrules even the united wishes expressed by all the associations in the matter of hours of sitting, in the matter of vacations, and the like. So far as the hours of sitting, namely, from 10-30 a.m. to 4 p.m., are concerned, all the legal associations and the representatives of the litigants prayed that if the High Court sat at 11 a.m. it would be most convenient for all. But the Chief Justice ruled otherwise. With regard to the long vacation, namely, the Puja Vacation, which is

considered as an important vacation by the Hindus and which is also necessary for refreshing or renovating the health of some of the High Court Judges, the vacation invariably begins towards the end of August—whether the Durga Puja or the Muharrum comes along in October or September does not matter,—just because certain individual European Judges will have to go on leave to Britain and therefore they want the vacation to commence so early as August. This is a system which must be changed, Sir.

Sir, the third important point is that in the framing also of rules of procedure in the Original and Appellate Sides due consideration is not shown to the opinion of the members of the three branches of the legal profession

Then there is the fourth and the most important reason for deterioration in this respect, namely, that the High Court has been found to be subservient to the Executive of the province. This is a matter which is very serious and this is evident from the recent selection of one of the High Court Judges for the post of Director of Civil Supplies of which mention was made a few days ago. It could not possibly have been done under the regime of any other Chief Justice than the present Chief Justice of Bengal. No Chief Justice under the old regime would have agreed to this and no Judge would have cared to come to serve in a job although he might have got a little increased allowance thereby. Under the circumstances, I feel that it is high time that the Ministry should apply their mind and the Government of Bengal should apply their mind as to how to improve the morale of the High Court and to establish the confidence of the people in the citadel of justice to which we look up to as the custodian of the civil liberties of the people and for the administration of justice unimpaired by any executive interference.

Mr. SPEAKER: I may inform you that the names of the Hon'ble Judges of the High Court uttered by you will be expunged from the proceedings.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Under which rule, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you can well understand that it is very desirable that the names of the High Court Judges should not be brought in in our discussion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think you cannot expunge anything from the proceedings unless you are specifically empowered to do so under the rules. After all, the Speaker has also to follow the rules, and if you point out the rule to me, Sir, I shall submit; if not, I will not.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it is not at all desirable that any distinction should be made between a Judge and a Judge of the High Court. You name certain Hon'ble Judges as very eminent implying thereby that there are several others who are not so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Of course, I do, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is better therefore that the names should be expunged.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is my privilege, Sir, as a member of this Assembly to have freedom of speech in this House and I enjoy complete immunity. Therefore, Sir, I will not agree to your suggestion about the desirability or otherwise of naming the High Court Judges. If you can show me any relevant rule, I will submit; otherwise you cannot deny me the privilege I enjoy under the Government of India Act as a member of this House. Even the Speaker, Sir, has got to follow the rules.

Mr. SPEAKER: I took it, Dr. Sanyal, that when I said in the midst of your speech that it was not desirable to name the High Court Judges you desisted from uttering the names and that is why I took it that you had agreed to my suggestion but if you just object to that, I will look into the matter very carefully and let the House know tomorrow whether the names uttered by you should be deleted or not.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, no expunction can be done without the permission of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I promise to look into the matter and give my ruling tomorrow.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion, Sir, with a view to raising a discussion on the delay in making two Muslim appointments as District Judge which was advertised so far back as 1940. Sir, I know that the claim which I am making on behalf of the Muslim community will not receive due consideration in the hands of the present Ministry, but still I think it my duty to say a few words about the grievances of the Muslims in the matter of appointment as District and Sessions Judge. There are, Sir, 17 listed posts in the Judicial Department, of which only one is now being held by a Muslim. Sir, even in this miserable state of affairs the old Ministry, where Muslims predominated, thought it their duty to take two Muslim District Judges and advertised for the same so far back as 1940. Unfortunately, Sir, that Ministry went out of office for reasons which I do not like to discuss here, before they could make the appointments, and the present Ministry came into power. We all know the way in which this Ministry is dealing with rights and interests of the Muslims in all aspects and in various fields.

We have seen, Sir, how this Ministry has superseded the claims of the Muslims in the matter of appointment in all branches of the Civil Defence Department. We know that their rightful claims have been ignored by the Ministry and they have been deprived of their legitimate share in the affairs of the Civil Defence Department. We know that this Ministry even flouting the opinion of the Communal Ratio Officer has thrown many posts recommended by that officer to be reserved for the Muslims open to all irrespective of communities. We all know, Sir, how this Ministry in matters of promotion in almost all departments superseding the claims of desirable Muslims are filling up posts by Hindus—not better qualified. In spite of knowing

all these things I am bringing this motion before the House only to draw the attention of the members of this House as well as members of the public, though I know this Ministry cares very little for public opinion. Though the posts were advertised so far back as in the year 1940, they have not yet seen their way in making the appointments. They are deferring it and I do not know how long they will defer it. When the posts have been advertised it is an easy matter to fill up the vacancies. The rule is very clear. There is a clear provision in the Government of India Act. I refer to the relevant section—section 254. Therein it is laid down, "Appointments of persons to be, and the posting and promotion of, district judges in any Province shall be made by the Governor of the Province, exercising his individual judgment, and the High Court shall be consulted before a recommendation as to the making of any such appointment is submitted to the Governor." Applications were received which were duly forwarded to the High Court and I understand the Hon'ble High Court made their recommendation, and I do not see any reason why the appointments are being held over. At the same time for the last two years these two vacancies, which are reserved for Muslims, are being occupied by caste Hindus, and I submit that all these two years Muslims have been deprived of these posts and the Ministry has failed to take any action. I now understand that the Ministry is trying to tackle the matter in such a way that the rightful claims of the Mussalmans are being denied. The present Ministry is doing something to deprive the Muslims of these posts which the past Ministry had kept reserved for Muslims.

Sir, I submit that the Ministry, if it so desires, can do anything it likes, because it is in power, but a day will come when it will have to explain its conduct before the public. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to think over the matter seriously and see that these two posts be immediately filled up by competent Muslims from among those persons who have already been recommended by the Hon'ble High Court.

With these few words, Sir, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support the motion moved by my honourable friend Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad. He explained the circumstances under which it was decided by Government to appoint two Muslim District Judges. The decision was taken about two years ago and as far as I remember the posts were advertised about a year and a half ago. I want to know from the Government why the vacancies have not yet been filled up; why they are sitting over the matter for all this time—a year and a half. What is the reason? Sir, the Muslim community has been suffering in various ways at the hands of the present Government in various branches of the public service. The Muslims are not getting appointments according to the Service Ratio Rules. The rules are being abused to deprive the Muslim community of their proper quota. But in this case it was definitely decided that two Muslim District Judges would be appointed. Do they mean to say that competent Muslims are not available in the whole of Bengal who can be appointed as District Judges? Are there not competent lawyers both in the High Court and in the mufassal courts

who can fill these posts with dignity and honour? In spite of this, what is the reason why these posts have not yet been filled up? This is the question I ask the Government to answer.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to support the motion just now moved by Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad. So far as the two District Judges are concerned representations were made to the Government of Bengal for appointing Muslim District Judges because there was paucity of Muslim Judges in the cadre. Out of 34 District Judges there were only two Muslim Judges. So, to remove this paucity in the cadre of District Judges representations were made from Bar Library and from the Muslim representative bodies and in response to the representations made by the various associations of the Muslims Government some two years back made a definite promise and there was a decision by the Government for appointing two Muslim District Judges. After that applications were asked for and the High Court and the Public Service Commission were consulted and recommendations were made both by the Public Service Commission as well as by the High Court for appointment of two Muslim District Judges. I say, Sir, the present Ministry is sitting tight over the matter only because the District Judges to be appointed are reserved for Muslims. If these posts were not reserved for Muslims but were kept open to all the communities, I think, they would have been filled up as soon as the Ministry came into power. Both the High Court and the Public Service Commission have been consulted and they have sent in their recommendations and two names have ultimately been recommended and it is only for the Government to just publish the appointments. My apprehension is that it is only because the posts will go to the Muslims, the Ministry is sitting tight over the matter. The Ministers do not want that the Muslims should have their proper share in the judicial administration of the province.

With these words, Sir, I support the motion of my friend Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission I want to advance reasons other than those given by Dr. Sanyal for the deterioration in the respect commanded by the High Court Judges. I would respectfully draw the attention of the Government to the present edition of the High Court Civil Rules and Orders which are intended to guide and control the subordinate judiciary and the lawyers of the Province in the conduct of their cases. A perusal of the present Civil Rules and Orders or any previous edition thereof will amply justify my accusation that the present idea of the Hon'ble Judges of the High Court is only to augment the revenues of the province without any corresponding desire to deal justice, absolute justice and undiluted justice. The whole of the contents of the Civil Rules and Orders will show how revenues can be augmented and should be augmented. This spirit of the *bania* should never have been followed by the High Court and it is regrettable that instead of dealing justice the High Court is working in this way. The present High Court Judges are of the opinion that everybody, from the Judicial Officers to the Ministerial

officers, lawyers, barristers, vakils, advocates, muktears, all should be looked upon with a good deal of suspicion. A perusal of the Civil Rules and Orders will show that the High Court Judges have no confidence even in their own Subordinate Judges, namely, the District Judges or the Subordinate Judges, the Munsifs or the Deputy Magistrates or the District Magistrates when exercising judicial functions.

The High Court now calls for returns from the District Officers as to why revenue in a particular matter has fallen down or why revenue in a particular matter has not come up to the expectation of the High Court. Sir, these are the things which the High Court ought not to have done. The question of distrust and want of confidence is at the root of undermining the highest respect which the High Court Judges can command from the general public; and it is well-known that of late the High Court Judges have been dealing justice with something like political in their views.

Then, Sir, I oppose the motion moved by Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmed and supported by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and Mr. Israil in which they have deplored the non-appointment of two Muslim gentleman as District Judges. I would respectfully submit it for the consideration of my Muslim friends whether it will be desirable if competent Muslims are not found——

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Even now competent Muslims are not found. We should go out of this world!

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: I am not quarrelling with you. If competent Muslims are not available, why should it be that because of communal ratio rules there should be these Muslim Judges. District and Sessions Judges are next to High Court Judges, who can inspire confidence over the administration of justice and over the general public. To insist upon the appointment of certain persons as District Judges simply because of the fact that they are Muslims will do immense injustice to the cause of the pure administration of justice in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: I just draw your attention, Mr. Sen, to one fact. Their grievance is that these posts were advertised long ago and in the advertisement it was stated that Muslims would be appointed.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: That decision had been taken two years ago and the present Ministry has been in office for 16 months. Then during the remaining 8 months' time, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, the then Hon'ble Minister, could have done something.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, my friend over there from the Congress Benches has given us a light—a light not to illuminate but to darken the whole situation. My friend has talked glibly, if I am not very deficient in following him. He ought to have known that the posts were created for the Muslims and Muslims alone. It was not a question of competence or incompetence, it was not a question of favour, it was a question whether suitable candidates could be found on advertisement and appointments could be made if Muslims could come out. Now-a-days there are many qualified Muslims. At least my friend will recollect the words of Mr. Sarat Chandra

Bose that the University of Calcutta and the University of Dacca have produced Muslim graduates in general lines as well as in other special branches sufficient in number just to adorn any place of responsibility in the administration, and there cannot be any gainsaying in the matter. That my friend should remain in darkness even today is really surprising. He has waxed eloquent, but I feel that he does not know that the Muslims who were treated in the past most shabbily are not even today given chance in asserting their claims. My friend has got a surgical knife according to the definition of Dr. Sanyal over there, we have got a butcher's knife (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, no. Babu Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty.) All right, Sir, I may be excused. My friend would cut by a doctor's knife, we would cut by a butcher's knife they say. I do not know whether butchery has been perpetrated today by my friend sitting over there in the Congress Bench. Sir, this is very unfortunate. This embitters the feeling. I think, this feeling is aroused by a feeling that is in the mind of some people in our countryside which goes just to affect the relation between the Hindus and the Muslims which should always be cordial. We believe we must go on in harmony together. We must work shoulder to shoulder for the common good of the motherland; but this expression of feeling, I think, leads us to a position which makes us nervous. We feel that our affairs will not remain safe in the hands of those elements that exist yet. Surely, my friend will call it national and his nationalism stung me to the quick. We do declare today and openly that among the Muslims there are people who can well adorn any place either the Bench or the Bar or any platform wherever they will be called upon to serve. This being the situation, I must say that there is no dearth of men sufficiently competent to adorn the bench of the District Judge. Already there were men who served and served with reputation. If my honourable friends of the Treasury Bench had no time to look into the file it was unfortunate. They would see how the then Government tried to do something so far as Muslim appointments were concerned; they would further find out how many Muslims were appointed——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not dilate upon that point any more. It is already prayer time and I shall adjourn the House.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: All right, Sir, I support the motion moved by my friend Mr. Israil.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, before you adjourn the House for prayer I feel it my duty to assure our friends of the Muslim League and the Muslims in general that it is the policy of the Congress Party to give them the greatest possible opportunity to participate in the administration of this Province including the judiciary——

And, Sir, if suitable qualified candidates are forthcoming—and I am sure there are suitable candidates—we shall certainly not hesitate to give them the highest jobs in the province.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment)

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I had no mind to take part in this debate. But as it is a very important question, I think I will fail in my duty if I do not say anything on a matter like this, namely, the appointment of two Mahomedan judges for two districts. If such an important matter could not draw the attention of the Government, I believe Government is not discharging its duty properly. I know this Department has practically very few Mahomedan judges.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are there any candidates here? (Laughter.)

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I am speaking on that, Sir. Hear me first. Let me finish my speech and then you may say whatever you like.

One of my friends in the Congress Benches—probably it is Mr. Nagendra Nath Sen—thinks that my community——

Mr. SPEAKER: Nawab Saheb, I would like to say one thing. It was unfortunate that the communal question was dragged in in a matter where no question of communalism could possibly arise. It was to a certain extent due to my inattention to the speech that was delivered by Mr. Sen, and I do not like that any further Hindu-Muslim question should be raised on a motion like this.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I would like to point out to you that after being elected by us if you do not allow us to speak, specially in such a matter, you are doing us an injustice. The communal question has got a firm hold over the country and you say that the communal question must be left aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Nawab Saheb, I think you have not quite followed me. I do not say that there is no communalism in the country in the sense in which it is often used. But as you all know—and I cannot discuss from my present seat—communalism is a question of opinion. But what I say here is that the present motion does not give any scope for discussion on communalism having regard to the fact that the Government set apart these posts exclusively for Muslims. Therefore that is a digression, and I am requesting you not to dilate upon that point any more. If you have got any fresh contribution to make to the discussion you are quite welcome.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, may I submit that it arises in this way that we suspect that because the portfolio is held by a Hindu Minister these appointments are being delayed.

Mr. SPEAKER: That position has already been made absolutely clear by other speakers. So it does not arise.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I find my friend who has been elected by us thinks that he knows and understands everything much better than we do. (Laughter.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I have never said that.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, what I say is this: I support this Government, but I feel that if the Government would not do its duty properly, we are giving our enemies the handle——

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Whom do you mean by "enemies"? Who are your enemies? Is it the European group?

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I mean the Muslim League Party. (Laughter.)

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, is it parliamentary to call us enemies?

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: We are giving our enemies the handle to harass us. Sir, I would not sit idle and simply vote for the Government, for if I do that my position in the country will be misunderstood and the people of my community will think that I have become a Hindu now.

I ask you to think of this. Our Government, rather the present Government, which is now being supported by us must not be idle in actually filling up these appointments with Muslims. I specially urge upon them to fill up these appointments as quickly as they can so that they may not give a handle to our enemies to attack us.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are three amendments, one of which has been moved by my honourable friend, Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali, to raise a discussion on the persecution of Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors belonging to the Muslim League.

Sir, last year a similar cut motion was moved by my honourable friend, Mr. Farhad Raza Choudhury, and in the course of his speech he stated on the 12th March, 1942, as follows: "Khan Bahadur Abdul Gofran, Public Prosecutor and President of the District Muslim League, Noakhali, was served with a notice to show cause why he should not be removed from his office as Public Prosecutor for his non-attendance at the public reception of the Hon'ble Chief Minister." My honourable friend had the candour to admit this evening even though in a round about way that this gentleman, Khan Bahadur Abdul Gofran, who was supposed to have been dismissed last year, is still continuing in office. The order in question was passed by the local officials. The view which the Judicial Minister of the Province took in this matter was this that nobody, certainly not a Public Prosecutor, or a Government Pleader, should be penalised for the possession of any political views whatsoever. He took his stand upon that famous judgment of Lord Justice Esher in England where a similar question had arisen. And Lord Esher held that only members of the legal profession who held office of profit under the Crown should be penalised on two grounds, and two grounds alone: First, if he has acted in a manner unworthy of a gentleman—that

expression "gentleman" has a peculiar connotation in every country of the world including England. Secondly, if he has utilised his position for purposes of the furtherance of the political organisation to which he belongs inconsistent with his responsibility to the Crown. Sir, that classical judgment of Lord Esher is one to which future generations of Ministers might with profit make reference. (Cries of "Hear! hear!" from the European Benches.) My honouarble friend referred me to two cases more. One was the case of Maulvi Abdul Majid Chaudhury, Pleader, Lakshmipur, who was penalised by the then District Magistrate. He has since made a memorial to me, which is awaiting my decision. If my personal views find general acceptance, a similar consequence is bound to follow. I do not know anything about my honourable friend elsewhere, Mr. Kader Baksh. I should be glad to know the details about him, and I would invite the mover of the cut motion, my honourable friend Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali, to present his case properly before me. These three cases dispose of the points of view raised by my honourable friend, Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali.

The second point is the one to which much communal flavour has been added and I deeply regret the observations made by my honourable friend, Mr. Abdulla-Al Mahmood, where he stated that the acts of alleged injustice were done to two Muslim judges because the Judicial Minister of this Province was a Hindu. I emphatically repudiate that suggestion. May I tell you, Sir, in all humility that these two appointments are not in the gift of the Judicial Minister. Although the cut motion has been admitted with reference to my department this is for the first time tonight that I was wading through the vast mass of materials placed before me. Sir, the position in this: From the Bar three judges will have to be recruited. (A VOICE from the Opposition: Who is responsible?) It was the decision of the past Government, which this Government certainly have not overridden, to reserve two of these posts for Muslims. The question of Muslim *versus* Hindu, the question of sacrifice of Muslim interests do not arise here. The third vacancy is one which is open to all communities. The censure is being attempted to be laid at the door of the Government on the ground that there has been delay in the matter of making two Muslim appointments. First of all, Sir, that is not a fact; because with regard to the third appointment, which is open to all communities, there the permanent incumbent died so far back as the 9th of November, 1941. Sir, the difficulties which have stood in the way of the Provincial Government can be stated, first chronologically and then legally. Chronologically, there were two temporary vacancies on the 30th September, 1939. The past Government decided to reserve these two posts for Muslims. Advertisements were issued in the papers in July 1940. The appointments are subject to the provisions of section 254(2) of the Government of India Act read with Rules 4(1)(*b*) and 10(*b*) of the Statutory Rules. My honourable friend read section 254 of the Government of India Act. Section 254(1) of the Government of India Act is to the following effect: "Appointments of persons to be, and the posting and promotion of, District Judges in any Province shall be made by the Governor of the Province, exercising his individual judgment, and the High Court shall be

consulted before a recommendation as to the making of any such appointment is submitted to the Governor." Sir, the curious thing which has happened is this: The posts which I was mentioning to you just now were advertised in July, 1940. The Hon'ble High Court selected five candidates on the 30th August, 1941. At that time, at any rate, the Judicial Minister of the Province was not a Hindu. On the 17th the matter was referred to His Excellency the Governor. He, in the exercise of his individual judgment, decided to place the matter in the hands of the Federal Public Service Commission. The Federal Public Service Commission, that was on the 7th of December, 1941, made certain enquiries. They made enquiries about these five appointments whether the names were in preferential order or not. The Hon'ble High Court sent back the reply that the names sent up were not in preferential order. Then the Federal Public Service Commission in their latest letter, dated the 6th April, 1942, made a further enquiry as to what were the grounds for the recommendations made by the Hon'ble High Court. Sir, the Hon'ble High Court is the highest palladium of justice in this Province, and it has not yet responded to the invitation of the Federal Public Service Commission to state the reasons for these selections. Here there is no question, I repeat, of Muslims *versus* Hindus because the other Hindu appointment is meeting with the same fate. Sir, what Government is doing? Government has been dashing its head against the wall. Ministers can be abused to the heart's satisfaction by the honourable members in the Assembly The position of the Federal Public Service Commission, the position of the Hon'ble Judges of the High Court is quite different.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Under what rules the Federal Public Service Commission were consulted superseding the provincial Public Service Commission?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In the exercise of individual judgment by His Excellency the Governor of Bengal under section 254(1) read with rules 4(1)(*b*) and 10(*b*) of the statutory rules framed by the Secretary of State for India in Council.

My honourable friend Dr. Sanyal made certain references to the Hon'ble the High Court. A person like myself who has spent more than a quarter of a century in the High Court naturally feels great regret, deep regret when reflections are made on the Hon'ble the High Court. To a question from you, Sir, my honourable friend referred to section 69 of the Government of India Act and stated that he enjoyed the immunity of a member of the Legislature conferred on him by the Constituent Act. May I, Sir, with all humility, point out to you section 86(1)? That section reads, "No discussion shall take place in a Provincial Legislature with respect to the conduct of any judge of the Federal Court or of a High Court in the discharge of his duties." Presumably the discussion centred round the discharge of duties by the Hon'ble Judges and not upon the fact whether the present-day Judges were handsome men or not.

Sir, I shall only refer to my honourable friend Mr. Sen. He is a lawyer of eminence. He said that the High Court has lost its esteem from the

public because of certain rules and orders made for which the Government of Bengal, *i.e.*, the Ministry of the day, must be held responsible. The responsibility of the Ministry to the Legislature has a limited connotation here. May I refer you to sectoin 224 of the Government of India Act? According to section 224(*1*), "Every High Court shall have superintendence over all courts in India for the time being subject to its appellate jurisdiction, and may do any of the following things, that is to say,—

(*a*) call for returns;

(*b*) make and issue general rules and prescribe forms for regulating the practice and proceedings of such courts;

(*c*) prescribe forms in which books, entries and accounts shall be kept by the officers of any such courts; and

(*d*) settle tables of fees to be allowed to the sheriff, attorneys, and all clerks and officers of courts".

Here the Provincial Government does not come into the picture at all. No reference whatever is made to the Provincial Government or to the Council of Ministers, or to an individual Minister with regard to the rules which the Hon'ble the High Court frames pursuant to the provisions of the Constituent Act.

Sir, that is all, I think, what I need reply to. I am obviously omitting the three great criticisms which my honourable friend Dr. Sanyal has made against the Hon'ble the High Court. They are not admissible under section 86(*1*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I have got one or two words to add.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, on a point of order. As I just entered I heard the Hon'ble Minister in charge threatening that certain observations that I made were not admissible under section 86 of the Government of India Act. May we humbly request you, Sir, to read that section to the House and give the House your ruling on admissibility, because it does not lie in the mouth of the Minister replying to say whether a certain observation is within the rules? It is the privilege of the Speaker to decide.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I think you are perfectly right. It is my duty to give a ruling whether a certain observation made by a certain member of this House is admissible under the rules or not. My friend—I have forgotten that I have ceased to be an Advocate now—the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee has drawn attention to section 86 of the Constitution Act. I remember that section, and I also saw that section this morning before I came to the Assembly. I have not taken exception to his remark just now made simply because, as I have already stated, I would like to go into the matter deeply and to give my ruling subsequently. Your remarks are there. He has answered and he says he is not called upon to answer your remarks. So there the matter ends.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: May I make a personal explanation to make my position clear? I do not arrogate to myself—I have not that impertinence—the duties which belong to the dignity of your chair. I did not rise on a point of order when my friend was making his speech, but I am entitled to defend myself and to have my interpretation of section 86 so far as my conduct is concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is exactly what you have done.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: My friend Mr. Israil was enquiring why the matter went up to the Federal Public Service Commission. Section 254 of the Government of India Act lays down that the appointment should be made by the Governor acting in his individual judgment and the High Court shall be consulted. There is no mention of the Public Service Commission. In this case as many as 254 candidates had applied and the best thing that the Governor could do was to consult the Public Service Commission. The present position is that the Public Service Commission wanted to know why the High Court had selected only 5 out of a list of 254 candidates. The High Court refused to give the reason. We had correspondence with the High Court for permission to send all the papers to the Public Service Commission. To that we have not had a reply. That is the reason why the matter has been delayed so long.

Mr. SPEAKER: I propose to put the three amendments in the following order: first, the one moved by Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad, then the one moved by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, and last the one moved by Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali.

The motion of Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali that the demand of Rs. 75,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee that a sum of Rs. 75,12,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" was then put and agreed to.

8—Provincial Excise.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 24,59,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise".

Mr. P. BANERJI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 24,59,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this to raise a discussion on the excise policy and failure to effect total prohibition.

Sir, the excise policy of Government is one of drift. Government want to trade upon the evil propensities of the masses encouraging them to get intoxicated. I could have understood the bureaucratic Government taking advantage of the situation, but I cannot understand this Government calling themselves popular and real representatives of the people adopting the same policy. Under the new constitution when this Ministry came into power in 1937, total prohibition was the definite policy of this Government. In 1937 the then Minister said that the aim of the Ministry was total prohibition, but they must make some experiments and therefore some time should be given to them. In 1938, the Ministry selected Noakhali as the district where experiment of prohibition should be started. It is well known, Sir, that of all the districts in Bengal Noakhali is a district with a population of 22 lakhs only where country liquor or any other drug is consumed in the lowest degree. Now, let us go into the details and scrutinise what success this Government achieved on this experiment in Noakhali. There were as many as 36 shops, I mean country liquor, other intoxicating drug and ganja shops, in the district of Noakhali. The then Minister assured us that these shops would be closed immediately. Up to December, 1938, it was noticed that only 6 shops were closed and the remaining 30 shops were going on merrily. It was then stated by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that he was not satisfied with the experiment in Noakhali and that he would prepare a scheme with the help of the experts and this experiment would be made not only in Noakhali, but also in the district of Tippera. But even now that scheme has not seen the light of the day. The Chief Minister also in the course of the debate stated: "Speaking as a Muslim I deem it my duty to try to enforce prohibition, and if I do not try, I think I shall be failing in my duty to carry on the mandate of the House."

Now, Sir, the then Chief Minister is still the Chief Minister and I would like to enquire of him and also of the Minister in charge of Excise what success they have so far attained in this direction. So far as we are aware, it is nil. The next year also there was another statement made by the then Hon'ble Minister Mr. Raikut when Government spent a magnificent sum of Rs. 3,500 to produce a film in order to make propaganda, so that there might not be any drinking evil in this country. We do not know, Sir, whether any such propaganda as suggested by the then Hon'ble Minister was ever made.

Sir, I have summed up the position of the Excise Department as follows: In the year 1921 if anything has been done in this direction, I must say it has been done by the Congress. In 1921 during the civil disobedience movement there was less income in that direction. After the year 1921 right up to the year 1930 the excise expenditure was increasing. It varied between 13 crores 20 lakhs and 15 crores 22 lakhs. The following

statistics will show a decrease of the excise revenue: In the year 1929-30 the revenue was Rs. 2,26 lakhs, in 1930-31 it was Rs. 1,80 lakhs, in 1931-32 it was 1,68 lakhs, and in 1932-33 it was Rs. 1,58 lakhs. In this way the revenue was decreasing.

Now, Sir, the cost of establishment was between Rs. 13 to Rs. 15 lakhs. While in 1929 the revenue income was Rs. 2 crores 26 lakhs the expenditure was Rs. 13,73,000. While the demand for expenditure for the current year is Rs. 23,42,000, it has been increased to Rs. 24,59,000 for the next year. So, we find that the expenditure has increased by a magnificent sum of over Rs. 10 lakhs.

Sir, it has been stated that most of the income is derived from Calcutta and the 24-Parganas industrial areas. If Government were honest, they would have started the experiment in these areas where country spirit is consumed in large quantities. In Madras during the Congress regime Government introduced prohibition in the district of Salem, a district which consumes the highest quantity of intoxicants and it is well-known that they succeeded there.

Sir, as the time is very short, I have to put the whole thing in a nutshell. I would ask Government, while they are experimenting in Noakhali, why are they not trying to experiment in Tippera, why are they not making experiments in 24-Parganas and Calcutta where 80 per cent. of the intoxicant drugs is consumed by the industrial labour? It is well-known, particularly at this time when the prices of foodstuffs have gone up, that it is very difficult for labourers to meet their expenditure on account of their drinking habit and the condition of the families of these labourers can well be imagined. In these areas, these people were already living from hand to mouth and now they are starving.

Sir, is it in the fitness of things for this Government which gave assurances from time to time that their goal was total prohibition that in the course of the last 5 years their income from this source, instead of being reduced, has jumped up from the low level of Rs. 1,58,00,000 to Rs. 2,30,00,000? Is it not a thing for which the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department should feel ashamed that during his regime, in spite of the fact that they made attempts to bring about total prohibition, the income from this source has increased to Rs. 2,30,00,000? The argument that is put forward in the budget speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister is that it was due to the influx of labourers from other provinces, but this is not a fact.

Sir, with these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not move your motion. You may speak on the motion moved by Mr. P. Banerji because yours and his are almost the same.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, it may be that they would withdraw their motion. We do not know what their policy will be. They may not agree with our proposal. We do not know what they will do. So, if you kindly permit me, I want to move my motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, you move your motion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 24,59,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the prohibition policy of the present Government.

Sir, I will begin by saying that my friend Mr. P. Banerji has just analysed that there was a prohibition policy which was initiated by the last Government as long ago as 1937 and that Government introduced prohibition in the district of Noakhali where they partially succeeded and they went so far as to extend prohibition to the district of Tippera also. But now what do we find? The present Ministry consists of the Congress Parliamentary Party, better known as the Forward Bloc, and the Krishak Praja Party. If we read their speeches in the past years—in 1937, 1938, 1939 and 1940—we find that they always advocated prohibition. Not only that; they have always tried to make a capital out of it. They have always shown the example of Madras where total prohibition in the district of Salem was enforced and also of other Congress Provinces where it was enforced. They very vehemently and very forcibly urged upon the then Government to enforce total prohibition—not partial or anything like that but total prohibition—in this Province. But what do we find in their own regime? The Hon'ble Chief Minister himself in his financial statement has tried to screen it from the public view in the following words: "This is attributable to the larger consumption of country liquor as a result of the influx into this Province of large numbers of non-Bengalee labourers, evacuees and camp followers addicted to liquor." Not only that. There is another intoxicant known as opium. The consumption of opium has also increased to a large extent. That has also been accounted for at page 16 of the Red Book: "larger consumption of opium owing to the influx of foreigners—evacuees and others—addicted to this drug". So, this Govrnment wants to shift their burden on to other things. They say that so far as the Bengalee population is concerned, they are not taking liquor. But if we look to the figures given at page 13 of the Blue Book we find that the income from country liquor this year is Rs. 1,14,00,000, and, in the Revised also this is Rs. 1,14,00,000, while it was only Rs. 77 lakhs in 1941-42. From Rs. 77 lakhs it has jumped up to Rs. 1,14,00,000 in the next year and also in the current year. Sir, everybody knows that country liquor is consumed only by the Bengalees. It is not the Europeans or any other people who consume this country liquor, but they have tried to do—as the Bengalee proverb goes " শাক দিয়া মাছ ঢাকা" ! They want to hoodwink the public as they often say that it is not their responsibility; it is Governor's responsibility; it is the

responsibility of the permanent officials. Here also they say the same thing. Consumption of liquor has increased tremendously. No doubt, it is due to the fact that there has been an influx of evacuees and non-Bengalee labourers!

Sir, I will bring it to the notice of this House that so far as labourers are concerned, almost all labourers in this Province are non-Bengalees. They were non-Bengalees previous to the assumption of office by this Government and they are non-Bengalees even now. So, so far as the contention that the influx of labourers and evacuees has raised the consumption of country liquor is concerned, this is solely intended to deceive the people both in this House as well as outside.

So far as the consumption of opium is concerned, it has been said that it is due to the consumption by foreigners. I will enquire of the Hon'ble Minister as to whom does he mean by "foreigners"? I want a categorical reply from him on this point. So far as evacuees are concerned, I want to know from him categorically as to who are these evacuees, from which place have they come—from Burma or from any other place—what is his source of information for his statement that they are addicted to country liquor or other liquors and how many of them are so addicted and has he taken any census in this connection?

(At this stage the honourable member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not move your motion. Your motion and that of Mr. Israil are of the same nature. So I would rather ask you to speak on his motion.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Of course the motion of my friend Mr. Israil refers to the prohibition policy and my motion refers to the apathy to push the policy of prohibition. What I would like to say is that there is a policy of prohibition but Government is not pushing forward that policy. So it is somewhat different.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it is almost the same. So you need not move. You rather speak on that line.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Then, Sir, I do not move my motion.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, by moving my motion I shall not encroach upon much of your valuable time, but I will only support the motion of my friend Mr. Israil in whom I have great trust.

I shall not enter into the figures, for these have already been given by my friend Mr. Israil. I want only to narrate the famous story from a famous Arabic book of literature "Kailubi".

The story runs thus: A pious sufi had a dream. What he beheld was that Satan was lying prostrate in deep sleep snoring in comfort.

Darvish naturally made a query. Damned Satan, you must have been all busy in your deeds trying every moment to lead the mumins away from the path of God. How can you afford to sleep! Satan reposingly replied, "By truth, I have no business now. In these days ulemas are so many. Many of them have accepted my creed. They are my agents. They are busy enough. For that I have no business now". I do not know if the analogy applies.

We, Mussalmans, believe in the Holy Quoran. The Holy Quoran left us no option. We cannot touch intoxicants. We cannot permit use of them by any man or woman around us. We must always prohibit the use of intoxicants in any shape and form by iron hands. To take shelter under a plea of revenue or loss of revenue or of administration or of administrative difficulties is not permissible, by *Shariat*. To trade in the drugs is a heinous sin and crime from *Shariat's* point of view.

Now, Sir, the Budget has an increase of revenue not because the excise duty rates have been increased with a view to prohibition but because more and more men and women have used the intoxicants.

The old Government under the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq was forced to commit to the policy of prohibition. The new Government under the same man has permitted more of the use of the intoxicating elements by our people. The district of Noakhali was selected for experiment on prohibition during the last regime and we were glad to notice that progress was highly satisfactory but what we see today is that Maulvis and Maulanas have taken out licenses in the present regime by giving up their allegiance to the Muslim League. In my district a Choudhuri Sahib, a Muslim Leaguer then, has recently changed his creed and has secured a licence in the name of his nephew living under his roof and eating from the same table. Progressive coalition has taken to progressive prohibition in this way. Among the Hindus the dealers in wines and other intoxicants had no place in the society. They were damned as a class. People were enjoined not to approach the shop or homestead of a *suri*. Now Brahmins also have taken out licences.

But how do the morals stand now—is the pertinent question. It is in a very low ebb, must be the curt reply. Progress, therefore, of the progressive Government of the day has increased in demoralisation. This is my grievance.

Probably a Maulvi from the Opposite Benches will tell me and quote Hafiz—

بدی سجادہ رنگیں کن گرت پیر مغاں گوید
کہ سالک بیخبر نبود ز راہ و رسم منزلہا

on a direction from the peer of the tavern colour your prayer mat red with wine. He is on the path. He is knowing. He will carry you to the destination. Yes, the peer of the tavern is there. He tried to mislead in the past. He misleads now. He will mislead in future. Many ulemas are his disciples. So Satan has no work for himself. Let him snore in deep sleep.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think it would be a good thing to reiterate our view with regard to the question of prohibition as it is again likely to be made an issue by the Opposition. Points which occur to me are:—

(1) That during the period of emergency we cannot afford to lose the revenue from excise which amounts to Rs. 2 crores and 32 lakhs. If we are determined to sacrifice this revenue, then we must be prepared to sacrifice expenditure on Education and Public Health which is already being cut down. The Provincial Government cannot avoid the heavy expenditure arising out of war conditions, and if they sacrifice excise revenue it means that they must cut down very substantially expenditure on the nation-building departments.

(2) The continual rise in excise receipts is a healthy sign if we take into account the corresponding decrease which has occurred in the consumption of illicit liquor. Honourable members will find that statistics show that in periods when excise revenue fell, as in the period between 1928-29 and 1933-34, there was an alarming increase in the convictions for illicit distilling and smuggling of alcohol. Since 1937 Government have been successful in checking the very serious increase in illicit distilling by adopting a policy of introducing in licensed shops a cheap 75° U.P. liquor and licensing new shops in places where illicit distilling is detected. This has certainly resulted in an increase in consumption, but it has been at the expense of the consumption of illicit liquor. We would emphasise that it is the consumption of cheap highly injurious illicit liquor which has the most serious social effects and that any excise policy should be directed, in the first place, to checking this evil.

It is from this point of view mainly that we are opposed to the proposal of prohibition. We doubt whether it is possible to change the habits of the people by legislation and prohibition laws have always proved easy to evade. Penal measures are admittedly a deterrent, but their application not only involves costly administrative machinery but also calls for a continuous and exhausting vigilance, and in the battle of wits between the law and the law-breaker it is not always the latter who comes off second best. Reformation is a painfully slow process and, in our opinion, the evils of drink can only be brought home to the people through education, moral persuasion and inexhaustible patience. Experience of prohibition legislation in other provinces in India and in other countries has not been encouraging. It has led to an increase of crime, to smuggling and to increased consumption of illicit liquor with the most damaging effects on health and morale. In our opinion it requires years of propaganda and education before we can hope to make prohibition effective.

We do not think that it is a just criticism that Government have increased the consumption of alcohol. In fact the duty on country liquors has, we understand, been considerably increased during the past year. We consider that what has happened is that Government have been successfully diverting consumption from illicit liquor to the licensed shops. We do not think that in existing circumstances Government can afford to

experiment any further with prohibition and we are doubtful in any event of the wisdom of doing so. In our opinion Government policy should be directed towards regulating consumption through licensed shops and stamping out consumption of illicit liquor, and we, therefore, oppose the cut motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, charges have been made from the official Congress Group and from the Opposition League against the Government that it has surrendered the policy of prohibition. I do not like to enter into controversies by arguments but would like to place certain facts for the consideration of this House whether this Government has gone back on the policy of prohibition or whether it is trying to proceed with the policy of gradual prohibition which is the accepted policy of this Government.

No doubt there has been a sudden jump of revenue to the province from head "Excise". It is a tragedy for the department that the revenue has increased. I would give the House some reasons as to how this increase of revenue came by.

Country spirit.—The increase is mainly due to the following causes: (1) Employment of a large number of labourers, a large portion of which is of non-Bengalee element and is imported from outside in constructional works of various kinds in connection with the war and defence services.

(2) Presence of a large number of evacuees from Burma and other places in the East overrun by the enemy. A fairly large proportion of this population is addicted to liquor.

(3) Increased industrial activities resulting in the employment of a fairly larger number of non-Bengalees for the prosecution of the war.

(4) Shortage of supply of overseas foreign liquor and the consequent increase in the price of India-made foreign liquor which was instrumental for the diversion of a fairly large portion of consumers of foreign liquor to country spirit.

(5) Presence of a large number of troops and camp followers in the province which are also reported to be consuming country spirit.

Foreign liquor.—The increase under the head is partly due to larger consumption of India-made spirits owing to scanty supply of overseas liquor and partly to enhancement of the rate of duty on India-made spirits from Rs. 21-14 to Rs. 25 per every gallon. The rate was further enhanced by Rs. 10 per every gallon from 1st February, 1942.

Opium and hemp drugs.—The increase under this head is also due to larger consumption of the drugs owing to the influx of foreigners, evacuees and others addicted to the drug.

My honourable friend Mr. Israil has questioned whether this is due simply because of the influx of foreigners and labourers from outside. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Whether any census was taken.) Certainly, no census could be taken but there are indices which will show that it is due to the influx of labourers, because this increase has occurred only in

districts where there are constructional works relating to war and industrial areas. I have got in my hand monthly statistics of the consumption of liquor and other drugs for the month of December. From this it will be quite evident that it is only in five districts where large increase of revenue has occurred. These are Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Calcutta. The figures in my hand will show that in certain districts in the mufassal there has really been decrease in consumption and in other districts there is a slight rise, but that is not so much significant. From this it can be fairly concluded that it is the large influx of labourers and evacuees from Burma which is primarily responsible for the increase under the head "Excise".

Now, Sir, it has been said by my honourable friend Mr. P. Banerji that just as the past Government did nothing this Government also is following in its footsteps. I must say that we have certainly proceeded some way towards prohibition. During the past five years the experiment was confined in the district of Noakhali and a few shops were closed. In the year 1941-42 it was decided by the past Government that in the year following, that is, the year under report, 1942-43, some shops in the district of Tippera would be closed. We have followed their advice and we cannot do further because we could not initiate something new at that time. It has been also the consistent demand of our party that the process that is being followed towards gradual prohibition is not enough and something ought to be done which will accelerate the pace. In deference to the wishes of the party we have modified that principle to an extent that was possible under the circumstances. The accepted policy of the past Government has been to enforce prohibition gradually in a selected number of districts and to observe how the experiment succeeds and, if it succeeds, to extend the area of experiment to include other districts. As we found after assumption of office that that experiment did not go a long way towards prohibition, we modified it to a certain extent in deference to the wishes of the party and also in deference to the wishes of the Congress Group which were expressed during the last budget discussion. They wanted that prohibition should not be confined to a particular area because in that case it would take a century to come to total prohibition throughout the province. In deference to those wishes we have modified the policy in a way so that gradual prohibition could be enforced throughout the whole province, district by district. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Where has it been introduced?) I have called for reports from the Collectors. According to that policy they should give us reports as to the number of shops that can be closed down in the coming year. I have got reports and I can say this much to the House that it is contemplated in the coming year to close down as many shops as the past Government did in the course of five years. More than this, Sir, we could not do, because there are certain circumstances which stood in our way.

My honourable friend Mr. P. Banerji has referred to the Congress provinces. I submit, Sir, that I have gone through the reports of the Congress provinces during their regime in Madras and in Bombay. I find from them

that though in both the provinces the policy of total prohibition was introduced in some districts, it had done some good to the rural area only at a cost of provincial revenue, which the present Government cannot bear. I shall simply place facts. In answer to the query of Mr. P. Banerji, I shall read out from the Administrative Report of the United Provinces where it is stated: "The revenue derived from the six districts under prohibition amounts to Rs. 20,968 during the year under report as against Rs. 9,80,153 in pre-prohibition period. The extra expenditure on the additional staff, excluding propaganda, etc., amounted to Rs. 71,793 during the year under report." It can be fairly inferred from this, that if we follow the footsteps of the United Provinces Government at this time when the province is passing through financial stringency we shall have to forego, as Sir Henry Birkmyre stated just now, a revenue of Rs. 2 crores and 32 lakhs, and in addition to that we shall have to provide extra money for the additional staff of detecting illicit distillation and other illicit import. Everyone can imagine that at such a time when we cannot even spend a single farthing more for our nation-building departments, it is impossible for this province to forego this revenue. I do not for a moment claim that we have proceeded a long way towards prohibition though that is our aim. Being handicapped we have done what we could have done, and we have modified the excise policy. Instead of confining the gradual prohibition to a certain district, we shall try from the coming year, i.e., from 1943-44 to introduce prohibition throughout the province and try to close down a number of shops in each district.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 24,59,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerji that the demand of Rs. 24,59,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman that a sum of Rs. 24,59,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise", was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-45 p.m. till 4-30 p.m. on Friday, the 12th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 12th March, 1943, at 4-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 198 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Jute Advisory Committee.

***128. Khan Bahadur AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state the personnel of the—

(*i*) existing Jute Advisory Committee; and

(*ii*) former Committee?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the claim of the opposition members of the Legislature was considered before the formation of the present Committee?

(*c*) Is it a fact that since the creation of the Jute Advisory Board members of the opposition in the Legislature were all along represented on the Board?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for deviation?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*), (*i*) and (*ii*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) and (*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Representatives of the interests concerned were chosen irrespective of party.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) (i) and (ii) of the starred question No. 128.

The membership of the Jute Advisory Board since its establishment in 1940 has been as follows :—

Representative of—	1940-41.	1942.
Indian Jute Mills Association	Mr. W. A. M. Walker.	Mr. W. A. M. Walker.
Calcutta Baled Jute Association.	Mr. B. Kanodia.	Unable to act.
Bengal Jute Dealers Association.	Mr. Kanehia Lall Lohia.	Mr. Kanehia Lall Lohia.
Calcutta Baled Jute Shippers Association.	Mr. P. N. Flangini.	Mr. J. C. Niven.
Growers ..	Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, M.L.A.	Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, M.L.A.
	Babu Jagat Chandra Mondal, M.L.A.	Babu Jagat Chandra Mondal, M.L.A.
	Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman, M.L.C.	Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman, M.L.C.
	Maulvi Mohd. Israil, M.L.A.	Maulvi Azhar Ali, M.L.A.
	Khan Bahadur Aulad Hossain, M.L.A.	Maulvi Abdul Hamid Shah, M.L.A.
	Mr. Ahmed Hussain, M.L.A.	Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed M.L.A.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Committee once formed remains in force for one year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: With reference to the statement, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the three members of the then jute-growers' representatives who have been eliminated all belong to the Muslim League Party?

Mr. SPEAKER: The names are there and we all know who belongs to the League Party and who belongs to the other parties of this House. So this question does not arise.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN: Is it a fact that these three members were removed in order to make room for three members of the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, certainly not.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Muslim Leaguers cannot represent the jute-growers?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Certainly they can if they have any interest in jute-growers.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for the substitution of these three members, namely, Maulvi Muhammad Israil, Khan Bahadur Aulad Hossain Khan and Mr. Ahmed Hossain, by Maulvi Azhar Ali, Maulvi Abdul Hamid Shah and Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The persons who according to the estimation of the Government take greater interest in the jute-growers and cultivators are selected.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is not a single member of the Opposition in the Jute Advisory Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: You know the members of the Opposition. Look at the list and you will see.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Sir, we want an answer from the Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: A supplementary question must be a *bona fide* request for information. If the information is there on the paper itself, no supplementary question arises.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for taking in all members from the Progressive Coalition Party in the places of those from the Muslim League Party?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already submitted that they were not taken in consideration of the fact whether they belonged to the Progressive Coalition Party or any non-progressive or reactionary party. That was not the consideration.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the members who belong to the Progressive Coalition Party were substituted—any one of them substituted—by any other?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The list is there and the honourable member can see.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will consider the desirability of retaining at least one or two members of the Opposition on the Committee?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already said that it was not done in consideration of whether a man belongs to the Progressive Coalition Party or to the Opposition.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that Babu Jagat Chandra Mandal belongs to the Opposition?

Mr. SPEAKER: I disallow this question on the very same ground on which I disallowed similar questions from the Opposition.

Jute acreage in 1943.

*129. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state what has been the quota fixed for growing jute in the year 1943?

(*b*) Do the Government consider the desirability of decreasing the quota for growing jute?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) The quota for jute acreage in 1943 is one-half.

(*b*) No.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Supplementary question, Sir——

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister in charge was cross-examined on this very point on some other day—I think yesterday. Is there any real supplementary question to put to the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Yes, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether there would be a great surplus of jute if 8 annas be grown this year?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Supply of improved varieties of sugarcane seeds to cultivators.

*130. **Mr. I. A. CLARK:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that the percentage of sugar which the Bengal sugar mills are getting from the sugarcane which they are now crushing is much lower than in the neighbouring provinces of Bihar and the United Provinces; and

(*ii*) that this is largely due to the fact that the bulk of the sugarcane which the cultivators are supplying to the mills is of the variety known as CO 213, the quality of which has greatly deteriorated in recent years?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what steps, if any, are being taken by Government to supply the cultivators with seed of improved varieties such as CO 313 and CO 421;

(*ii*) how many maunds of sugarcane seed were issued from the Government farms during 1941-42 and during the first 9 months of 1942-43 respectively of (1) CO 313, (2) CO 421, and (3) any other varieties; and

(*iii*) which officer of the Department of Agriculture is in charge of the production and distribution of Government sugarcane seed?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the officer referred to in (*b*) (*iii*) has any staff under him and

(*ii*) whether he has any other duties to perform?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) Yes Recovery per cent. of cane in Bengal varies from 8·81 to 9·07 as against 9·77 to 9·90 in Bihar and United Provinces.

(*ii*) Yes. The quality of CO 213 has deteriorated greatly in Bengal in recent years.

(*b*) (*i*) Sugarcane seeds of improved varieties including CO 313 and 421 are being distributed every year to the utmost capacity of the Government Farms for the last five years.

(*ii*) The following quantities were distributed from the Government farms—

	1941-42.	1942-43 (1st 9 months).
CO 421 ..	2,500 mds.	2,700 mds.
CO 527 ..	400 mds.	350 mds.
CO 313 ..	..	75 mds.
Other varieties ..	3,200 mds.	400 mds.

In the current year a scheme has also been sanctioned by the Government for the distribution of 261 lakhs of seed cuttings of CO 421 and 527 on agricultural loan basis to replace CO 213 in the Province. This is now being given effect to.

(*iii*) The Agricultural Chemist, Bengal.

(*c*) (*i*) One Field Assistant and one Fieldman (financed by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research) to study the performance of the varieties of sugarcane sent from Coimbatore and other Sugarcane Research Stations under the local conditions in Bengal, at the Dacca Farm.

One Fieldman for the general cropping at the Dacca Farm.

(*ii*) He has other duties to perform relating to the post of the Agricultural Chemist, Bengal.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the other staff mentioned in (*c*) (*i*) of the reply has other duties to perform as well as the duties relating to sugarcane?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, he is absolutely meant for this purpose.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether sugarcane cuttings were distributed throughout the whole province or to some particular districts of the province?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sugarcane does not grow in all the districts but in particular districts of Bengal and sugarcane cuttings were distributed in places where it grows in large quantities.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the Agricultural Chemist is in sole charge of distribution?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: He is in sole charge, but he does the work with the help of other staff.

Babu PREMHARI BARMA: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether any sugarcane cuttings have been distributed in the district of Dinajpur where sugarcane is grown in large quantities?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Certainly. In Dinajpur there is a sugar factory and they must have been supplied there.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state the causes of deterioration and whether Government tried to find out any means to improve the condition?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Offhand I cannot say the causes.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to the reply given to my question, will the Hon'ble Minister please state the names of the districts where sugarcane cuttings were distributed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I can name some of the districts, but without papers I cannot mention all of them—almost all the districts in North Bengal, some districts of the Presidency Division and a smaller number of districts in Eastern Bengal.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if there is any special staff for the distribution of sugarcane cuttings?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, Demonstrators distribute them.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With reference to his answer just given, will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government is prepared to investigate into the causes of deterioration and try to remove them?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Experts are already investigating into the matter.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where does he get these sugarcane cuttings, Nos. 421, 527, etc., from?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: From Coimbatore and other places.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what considerations some of the districts of the province were excluded from getting that supply?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: *Any district which wanted these cuttings was supplied with them. The districts where* sugarcane grows in large quantities were supplied with cuttings as a matter of course.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state through what agency these cuttings are supplied?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I have already stated, through Agricultural Demonstrators.

Maulvi AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether sugarcane cuttings will be available from the District Agricultural Officers?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Not from all the District Agricultural Officers.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state at what rate these cuttings have been supplied to the agriculturists?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice.

Internment of Maulvi Abdul Hamid Majumdar, of Comilla.

***131. Khan Bahadur ABIDUR REZA CHOWDHURY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware that Maulvi Abdul Hamid Majumdar, of Comilla, was home-interned for 3 months under the Defence of India Rules?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The reason is shown in the order, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (*a*) "yes", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the order of internment for 3 months on Maulvi Abdul Hamid Majumdar was served under the Defence of India Rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is given in the order.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, if this gentleman, viz., Maulvi Abdul Hamid Majumdar, was home-interned for 3 months immediately one week before the Hon'ble Ministers, Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan and Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, visited Comilla?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know the dates. I cannot answer this question.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: *Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if this gentleman was a Muslim Leaguer?*

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The honourable member can say. I cannot.

Assembly by-election of a certain constituency caused by the death of a sitting member.

***132. Mr. S. A. SALIM:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Constitution and Elections) Department aware of the fact that a constituency of this Legislature is unrepresented on account of the death of Mr. Mafizuddin Choudhury, M.L.A., of Balurghat?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date of his death; and

(*ii*) the reasons why no steps have so far been taken by the Government to call upon the constituency to elect a representative?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) 23rd November, 1942.

(*b*) (*ii*) Necessary action has already been taken; a notification calling upon the constituency to elect a member will issue on the 4th March, 1943.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to state the reason for withholding the notification for such a long time?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The matter is being investigated in the department and I cannot answer.

Message of typhoon from Meteorological Department to the Subdivisional Officer, Tamluk.

***133. Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the authorities of Meteorological Department in Calcutta sent a message to the Subdivisional Officer, Tamluk, on the 16th October last, intimating that a typhoon was coming from the Bay of Bengal;

(*ii*) that the message was received by him in the morning of the 16th October;

(*iii*) that he took no action whatsoever on that message; and

(*iv*) that the people of the subdivision were kept in absolute ignorance of the impending catastrophe?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any action has been taken against the Subdivisional Officer?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) to (*iii*) A telegram addressed to "Typhoon" (i.e., Thana Officer, Tamluk) was received by the Police Officer, Tamluk, on 16th October, 1942, at 10-00 hours. A copy was received by the Subdivisional Officer on 16th October, 1942, at 11-30 hours for information. The telegram did not suggest a "Typhoon" but "heavy rains, gales and cyclonic storm". The telegram was received by the police, hours after the "Storm" had commenced.

(*iv*) It cannot be said that the people were kept in ignorance. It may be noted that—

(*i*) the "heavy rains" with storm had been raging from 15th evening intermittently,

(*ii*) the gale and rainsqualls set in on the early morning of the 16th,

(*iii*) the cyclonic storm started at least one hour before the telegram in question was received by the police.

It may further be noted that telegraphic, postal, road, river and other communications in the entire Tamluk area had been destroyed before the catastrophe. I made enquiries from local officials, Sir, and I have had no evidence to substantiate the statement in the printed answer, and therefore I ask your permission to read the answer in the way I have just now done.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, will you kindly let us know if in giving a printed answer a Minister is entitled to add or alter words on his own account?

Mr. SPEAKER: These answers are given according to the information received by the Hon'ble Minister but if subsequent information was received by him I think he is entitled to add to or alter it if he so likes.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is his answer with respect to (*a*)(*iii*)? I want to know what action was taken. There is no answer in the Hon'ble Minister's reply to that particular question.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is an answer, Mr. Sen.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: The answer is that "the cyclonic storm started at least one hour before the telegram in question was received by the police", but the question is what action did the Subdivisional Officer take on receipt of that message.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice of that question but for the present I may say that the Subdivisional Officer did his utmost that possibly could be done in the circumstances to circularise the message.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be surprised to hear that the Subdivisional Officer did absolutely nothing?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no question: you are only giving out your own information.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: What precise action did the Subdivisional Officer take?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have verified myself by enquiring if anything was done and I am satisfied that the Subdivisional Officer did what possibly could be done. If you give me notice I shall furnish all the details.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he actually means by the word "Congress"? Are we to understand it as meaning the "*ad hoc* Congress" or the "Forward Bloc"?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Ispahani Congress!

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: There is no reference to Congress in this question, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, there is, in the answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. A reference has been made to the printed sheet of the answer which does not form part of the answer for that part of the printed answer has not been read out by the Hon'ble Minister. For our purposes, Sir, the answer actually given by the Hon'ble Minister should be treated as his reply. So, I submit, no irrelevant issue should be raised.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it a fact that you did not read out that portion of the printed answer, Mr. Fazlul Huq?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, I did not.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: But that is part of the answer, Sir. It will be taken as part of the proceedings.

Mr. SPEAKER: No; it does not form part of the proceedings; it will be deleted from the answer.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What was the date and hour of the telegram referred to which was despatched from Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say that without notice. All the information I had in my possession I have given.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to state what further information he has and from what source, as a result of which he has deleted the words "by the Congress agitators"?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I submit the question of deletion does not arise, because the Hon'ble Minister never mentioned it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Stark, you are basing your question on a part of a reply which was printed but which has not been made a part of the answer, and that does not form part of the proceedings of this House. Therefore, if you raise any question on that part, that question, I hold, is irrevelant.

Mr. A. F. STARK: May I submit, Sir, on this point that if an answer is printed, it must be taken to be approved by the Minister who has made it. Furthermore, the Hon'ble Chief Minister in replying to this question said that as a result of further information supplied to him he had altered the answer. Are we not entitled to know what this further information is and from what source it has come?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is true that the answer as drafted by the department was approved by me. After that was done—I forget the date—there was another question in this House, in the course of the reply to which the words "Congress agitators" had been used, and there were questions from all sides of the House as to what I meant by "Congress agitators" because there are various kinds of agitators. In order to make my position clear, I therefore got into touch with the district authorities and asked them whether they were prepared to stand by the statement that they had been "smashed by the Congress agitators before the catastrophe". The reply I got was that the fact remained that communications had been destroyed, but there was no positive evidence as to who had done it. I, therefore, thought that I should not give the reply in the form in which it was prepared by the department.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer (*a*)(*i*) to (*iii*) the Hon'ble Minister states that "The telegram did not suggest a 'Typhoon' but 'heavy rains, gales and cyclonic storm' ". Do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that the situation was not serious enough to call for immediate action on the part of the Subdivisional Officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Subsequent events showed that it was very serious, but at that time the Subdivisional Officer could not do anything more than he had done in view of the conditions prevailing all round.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the "agitators" mentioned in this answer belonged to any political organisation in India?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, may I point out that I have given a statement which has made the whole position clear? It is on account of these various insinuations coming from all sides that I tried to avoid any word which would give offence to the members of the House.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHAWMIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state at what time the flood and storm came to Tamluk?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Subdivisional Officer of Tamluk was approached by the Municipal Chairman for the release of boats to rescue some floating people and that the Subdivisional Officer had not the courtesy to comply with the request?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether he is ready to make an enquiry into the fact that where a big typhoon was coming, the Meteorological Department sent a telegram stating "heavy rains, gales and cyclonic storm"? Why did they send such a wrong telegram?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, the question is not directed against the incompetency of the Meteorological Department, and therefore I am afraid that question does not arise.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, my question arises on the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that the Meteorological Department gave the report of heavy rains, gales and cyclonic storm.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, according to you the Meteorological staff was inefficient. You can well discuss it in the budget debate.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: In view of the fact that actual loss of life and damage to property took place on the night of the 16th and not on the morning of that date, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Subdivisional Officer took during the intervening period, i.e., from 1 a.m. of the 16th up to midnight?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered to the effect that the Subdivisional Officer did everything possible in his power after the receipt of the telegram and therefore that question does not arise.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Sir, I want a definite answer because here it is stated that "telegraphic, postal, road, river and other communications in the entire Tamluk area had been destroyed". The implication is that communications to village areas were rendered impossible. I want to know what steps were taken to inform the townspeople of Tamluk? The Subdivisional Officer got the information at 11 o'clock in the morning of the 16th and the damage took place on the night of the 16th. There was plenty of time——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not argue on that point. You should put a question.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I think I did answer not only that question but about a dozen supplementaries. If further information is needed, I will be prepared to answer if proper notice is given.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, may I rise to explain my difficulty. What portion of the answer has been removed? Because Sir, if you will read (*iv*), it says "It may be noted that.....", then comes (*i*), (*ii*) and (*iii*); after that the answer says, "It may further be noted that..... ". Therefore, the two notings cannot be broken; they go together. Which portion have you allowed to be removed? I have been disturbed in my mind because Ministers should not be allowed to interfere with the given answers. Either they should remove the whole answer or——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I have understood your desire. As I have been able to follow and understand, the Hon'ble the Chief Minister wanted to delete that part which speaks of the smashing being done by the Congress agitators. The last part would read thus: "It may further be noted that telegraphic, postal, road, river and other communications in the entire Tamluk area had been destroyed before the catastrophe". That is what he means to say.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: By whom?

Mr. SPEAKER: What he has stated is this, that the local authorities cannot say definitely who the authors of this destruction were.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the entire area had been denuded of communications how is it that the Subdivisional Officer, Tamluk, received a telegraphic communication? It is stated in the answer that postal, telegraphic, road, river and other communications in the entire Tamluk area had been destroyed. If that is so, how is it that the Subdivisional Officer, Tamluk, received a telegraphic communication?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He got it; I cannot say how he got it.

Relief measures to the riot-affected people of Narayanganj subdivision.

***134. Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that he consented to certain definite terms of agreement on the basis of which Hindu representatives of the riot-affected areas of the Narayanganj subdivision, agreed to withdrawal of cases against the Muslim accused; and

(*ii*) that the terms were—

(1) grant of gratuitous relief to the extent of one lakh of rupees to the Hindu sufferers in addition to the amount that had lapsed on 1st April, 1942;

(2) sanction of twenty-five lakhs of rupees to be paid as compensation to the despoiled Hindus; and

(3) establishment of five police outposts in Adiabad, Noadia, Burgoni, Gokulnagar and Goshar within the affected area?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount that has been spent in gratuitous relief in fulfilment of the term;

(*ii*) the amount, if any, that has been paid as a compensation to the Hindus; and

(*iii*) whether any new police outpost has been established: if not, why not?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of fulfilling the terms of the agreement?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) No. A copy of the petition of settlement addressed to the District Magistrate of Dacca is laid on the Library Table.

(*a*) (*ii*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

(*b*) (*i*) and (*ii*) A sum of Rs.1,35,000 was spent on gratuitous relief in the riot-affected area of Narayanganj subdivision in pursuance of Government decision on the subject: of this Rs.50,000 disbursed for purchase of food was distributed to Hindus and Muslims and Rs.85,000, for supplying artisans with tools and building houses, was distributed among Hindus only, since they alone had their tools or stock in trade or houses burnt or looted.

(*iii*) Orders have issued for the establishment of five additional police outposts within Raipura and Shibpore police-stations for one year in the first instance.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether previous to the settlement arrived at at Narayanganj the Hon'ble the Chief Minister accompanied by the Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca and Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee visited a locality and held meetings and conferences with the leaders of the local Hindu community?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that is so.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he made any commitments there as to the relief?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not remember what statements were made by the Hon'ble Ministers.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is in a position to contradict me if I say that those commitments were made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May have been. I don't remember.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a deputation of some Hindu leaders met him at his house at Jhowtala Road two months ago and made the same demand to him?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not exactly remember, but certain gentlemen saw me. I think I referred the matter to the local authorities.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he remembers that he definitely told them that he would certainly look into their grievances and see to it that the promises are redeemed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not only that; I advised them to get into touch with the local authorities.

Mr. S. A. SALIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the sum of Rs. 85,000 distributed for supplying artisans with tools and building houses has been distributed among the Hindus and no money has been distributed among the Muslims?

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: That is in the answer.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Petitions from Muslims were received and they have been sent to Dacca for disposal.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL-MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the agency for distribution of this Rs. 50,000?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say that off-hand. But if I may take it as a notice, I can give details.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to inform the House whether there are any Muslim artisans in the areas under discussion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Well, Sir, some petitions, as I have said, have been received from Muslims who call themselves small artisans of this class and those petitions have been sent to the local authorities with our recommendations for disposal.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: By when does he expect a decision from the local authorities on this point?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I believe the petitions have been disposed of and that favourably to the applicants.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any Muslim houses—houses either of artisans or any class of people—were burnt and looted in the locality?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am afraid I cannot go into communal details without materials before me.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: My question is not communal; it is for information.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? The Hon'ble the Chief Minister has not answered the question on grounds of communalism.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, no. I have answered your question.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Not mine, but your supporter's question.

While the whole answer is based on distinction between Hindus and Muslims is he justified in withholding the information asked for?

Mr. SPEAKER: His answer, as far as I understand, is that he could not go into the details. That is the whole trouble.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On communal grounds.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not on communal grounds. If my friend reads in my statement something that I did not mean, I cannot help it. What I said was that if communal details are wanted I must have notice.

Questions relating to the Departments of Commerce, Labour and Industry.

(Starred question No. 134A was called.)

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, I have not yet got the files. I have got only one file regarding unstarred question No. 12. The question may be held over.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, what has happened? We could not hear the Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: He says that he is not ready yet to answer the question, because he has not got the file.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: What is your ruling, Sir? When is it going to be answered?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not a question of ruling. You all know that yesterday it was stated that questions relating to the department of the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca would be answered from today. That is why these questions were put up. It now appears that the Hon'ble Mr. Barman was in charge and he says that so far as this particular question is concerned he has not got the files before him and he is not ready to answer it.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? An assurance was given to the Chair by the Council of Ministers through its President. Don't you think, Sir, that this is an indignity to the Chair, which should not be tolerated according to the parliamentary practice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is a relief that my honourable friend is not in the Chair! (Laughter.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to have a reply from a member of the Government, because I consider that this Government has offered this indignity to the Chair. I should like to know your ruling, your view of the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I do not know exactly if it is an indignity to the Chair. If it is an indignity to the Chair, it would be an indignity to the whole House. I doubt whether it can be called an indignity. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister no doubt made a statement that he would make arrangement and perhaps some arrangement has been made. With regard

to this particular question, the Hon'ble Minister who was entrusted with this work pleads his inability to answer it. I doubt very much whether it is an indignity either to the Chair or to the House. If the Hon'ble Minister had, for example, stated "I have not got sufficient time to answer or to make myself ready", I doubt whether that also would have been an indignity. They can certainly ask for some time and in this particular case, as far as I have been able to ascertain, up till now from their conduct it does not appear that they are asking for time for answering other questions. It is only with regard to one particular question. That is the point.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, may I suggest that this permission to withhold the question could have been obtained from you before the sitting today? He could have come and apologised to you and said "I am very sorry I am not ready", but is it proper for him to come to the House and when the question is called up by the Secretary, to say "I am not ready"? It was his duty to be ready. They are running away from their actual duties. That I call an indignity to the Chair.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, on a point of personal explanation. I was really told this noon—after 12—that I would have to do the job for the Nawab Bahadur in the Council. I had to prepare myself for one Bill, one resolution and one question. So far as this question is concerned, I did not even know before I came to the House that there was any short-notice question to be answered. So, I could not even ask the department to furnish me with the necessary papers. I shall certainly answer it tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that explanation will be accepted by the House, but I want to know one thing. Mr. Barman, are you prepared to answer other questions? Let us not be in the same difficulty with regard to other questions.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, so far as today is concerned, I have been furnished with only one file in connection with Unstarred Question No. 12. As regards the other held-over questions, I think I shall be ready to answer two questions daily. That would be convenient for me.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will take 15 days.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: All right, I shall try to answer more questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Four questions a day will do.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: All right, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I take it that the Hon'ble Minister will answer one question today and on and from tomorrow he will answer four questions relating to the department of the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur in the order in which they are printed.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Compensating a security prisoner for loss of articles.

38. Babu JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether security prisoner Babu Debabrata Ray, son of Babu Charu Chandra Ray, M.L.A., has not yet got back one of his luggages which were in the custody of the escorts during his transfer from the Hijli Special Jail to the Dacca Central Jail in February, 1942; and

(*ii*) whether the said Babu Debabrata Ray has sent several petitions to the Government to get back his luggage but to no effect?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken on those petitions?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of compensating Debabrata Babu for the articles contained in the said luggage?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) and (*c*) The matter is still under my consideration.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any effort was made by the police to trace the missing article?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Must have been.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, from answer to question (*a*) it appears that the security prisoner Babu Debabrata Roy lost his article more than a year ago. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what stood in the way of Government taking action so long?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We have been trying to find out the luggage.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long we will have to wait for the decision of the Government in the matter of compensation to the security prisoner in question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will try to pass an order in two weeks.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will Government consider the proposition of insuring the luggages of such men as security prisoners in future?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I can consider that question if I am furnished with the name of the company in view.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Is Government considering the question of paying compensation to the gentleman who has lost his luggage?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is under consideration.

Liaison Officer between civil and military authorities in Bengal.

39. Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Defence Department be pleased to state whether there is any Liaison Officer between the civil and military authorities in Bengal?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) his name;

(*ii*) the date of his appointment;

(*iii*) whether he is a—

(1) military officer, or

(2) civil officer;

(*iv*) the functions he has to perform;

(*v*) the name of the immediate officer of the Liaison Officer; and

(*vi*) whether Government have any intention of constituting a Board consisting of not more than 15 members to advise the Liaison Officer as regards the requirements and grievances of the civil population in Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEFENCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Mr. M. O. Carter, C.I.E., I.C.S.

(*ii*) 5th September, 1942 (afternoon).

(*iii*) A civil officer.

(*iv*) To ensure the closest co-operation between Government and the Army and R.A.F. authorities in all questions affecting the prosecution of the war.

(*v*) The question is not understood.

(*vi*) No.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*)(*iv*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the curtailment of railway services, curtailment of steamer services, the denial policy and the various restrictions imposed upon the despatch of goods and parcels by railway are within the purview of the work to be done by this officer, Mr. Carter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Carter is a Liaison Officer between Government and the Army. He is not a Liaison Officer between the public and the Army.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Does the Hon'ble Minister think that the availability of public conveyances for the speedy locomotion of goods and passengers is not within the purview of Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If such matters are referred to Government, Government will certainly consider what use can be made of the services of the Liaison Officer in these respects.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Is there any Home Defence Department under the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There are certain matters relating to defence which are dealt with by the Government of Bengal in the Home Department.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: There is no such thing as Home Defence Department so far as information of the public is concerned—we have heard of a Co-ordination Officer in the Civil Defence organisation—because Home Defence Department would in ordinary parlance be expected to be under the Commander-in-Chief.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you going to ask a question?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Yes, Sir. Where does the Home Defence Department reside?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It resides in the brain of the questioner because the word "Defence" ought to have been within brackets. That would indicate that within the Home Department there is a Defence Branch.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate his trying to avoid an answer. There is no bracket printed and, thereofre, if a Minister tries to mislead the House in this manner, I hope you will come down upon him. It is the Home Defence Department which has been given an identity and we know nothing about it. There is no bracket printed in the question.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The Minister, after having himself made a mistake, is so insolent and impertinent as to pass such remarks against another member of the House. What does he think of himself?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the answer given by the Hon'ble Mr. Basu was not worded happily. It could have been given in a better way.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The gentleman who had flown into a rage was wholly unjustified. The reference was not to the gentleman member who asked me where this department resided but the reference was to the member who has put the question without putting the word "Defence" within brackets. If they are so anxious to take offence, they will always take offence. Nobody can prevent it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions over.

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(*After adjournment.*)

Application for leave of absence.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal representing the Murshidabad General Rural Constituency to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly with effect from the 15th September, 1942, till the end of this session during which he is unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

The motion was put and agreed to.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

42—Co-operation.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 16,46,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation".

Sir, while presenting this demand before the House I want to make a brief observation and place before the House a short history of the working of the co-operative movement in this province for the year under review for the information of honourable members as well as for getting suggestions from them for the improvement of the department if and where they think necessary.

The most outstanding event during the year and perhaps in the history of the co-operative movement in Bengal has been the introduction of the long awaited Bengal Co-operative Societies Act, 1940, and the Bengal Co-operative Societies Rules, 1942. In order to take the fullest advantage of these new measures the bye-laws of the co-operative societies are being amended in the light of the new provisions. When things have settled down it is expected that these measures will exercise a salutary effect on the movement as a whole. On the one hand they provide safeguards against maladministration of the societies while on the other they are also liberal in their outlook so far as the well-managed societies are concerned. Section 10 of the Act provides for delegation of all or any of the powers entrusted with the Registrar other than those specified in the Second Schedule upon any co-operative society in respect of its constituent societies. As a matter of fact on an analogy of this principle a bold step has already been taken by conferring under section 10(*a*) of the Act the powers of the Registrar on the general managers of the three railways with regard to the three very successful railway societies, viz., the East Indian Railway Employees' Co-operative Society, Eastern Bengal Railway Employees' Co-operative Society and the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Employees' Co-operative Society.

The policy of the rehabilitation of the movement is being pursued with a greater determination so far as the liquefaction of the old frozen debts are concerned. The members are being constantly urged to come to the Debt Settlement Boards and have their debts scaled down strictly according to

their repaying capacity. Ten more Co-operative Special Debt Settlement Boards were set up during the year. The total number of these boards is now 206. The working of these boards has shown a definite improvement. Debts to the extent of Rs. 57·43 lakhs were settled in 1941-42 as against Rs 16·15 lakhs in 1940-41. Crop loans are also being supplied to these societies out of the funds provided by Government. In 1941-42 crop loan to the extent of Rs. 44·45 lakhs was advanced by Government through the Provincial Bank to the Central Banks. Out of this Rs. 36·53 lakhs has been realised leaving a balance of Rs. 7·92 lakhs about half of which is due from the Chittagong Division alone, where the collection suffered considerably because of the approach of the war towards the borders.

The obligatory charges of the Central Banks have also been reduced as far as practicable. In the case of the Central Banks placed in difficult financial position, either the rates of interest on deposits have been materially reduced or the payment of interest has been suspended altogether with the consent (direct or implied) of the depositors who have shown commendable spirit of sacrifice and also patience so far. Payment of the principal amount is being made to them on a *pro rata* basis.

The original "Debenture Scheme" has been replaced by a revised scheme known as the "Rehabilitation Scheme". The data furnished in the "Debenture Scheme" are out of date and are also not very reliable because of the hasty collection thereof by the agencies of the Central Banks. It has, therefore, been considered necessary to have all debts of the members scaled down and settled by Debt Settlement Boards strictly according to their repaying capacity. This alone can give us a fairly accurate estimate of realisable assets and bad debts of the societies. The issue of debenture has also not been considered advisable for various reasons and specially the present unsettled money market under the war conditions has also influenced this decision. The "Rehabilitation Scheme" has passed through the Finance Department and is expected to be placed before the Cabinet shortly.

Four more Land Mortgage Banks were established during the financial year 1942-43. Necessary staff has been provided for them by Government and the Government have also undertaken to finance all the Land Mortgage Banks in view of the inability of the Provincial Bank to advance long-term loans to these Banks out of their short or medium term deposits. The department has been paying increasing attention to the development of the co-operative marketing of the produce of the members of co-operative societies. Seven more multipurpose societies were organised this year. Government have also appointed a Special Officer for the development of the business of these societies. In 1941-42 the multipurpose and agricultural marketing societies handled agricultural produce to the value of Rs. 12 lakhs 44 thousand and made a net profit of Rs. 1 lakh 31 thousand as against Rs. 6 lakhs 78 thousand and Rs. 56 thousand respectively of the previous year. Government are also financing from the current year 11 of these marketing societies which are more important. Rs. 5 lakhs have been sanctioned so far for the purpose and Rs. 2 lakhs more have been asked for, for the Parbatipur society which is the largest of its kind with a rice mill

of its own and also Rs. 1 lakh for the Central Paddy Sale Society in Calcutta. The multipurpose societies mainly undertake marketing of paddy and rice and are situated in the paddy-growing areas. A scheme for assisting the marketing societies with staff at Government expenses and with free grants or long term loans at a low rate of interest with a view to enable them to meet the cost of construction of godowns is under consideration of the Government.

Two jute sale societies were set up during the year at Belakoba in the district of Jalpaiguri and at Sarisabari in the district of Mymensingh which are important jute centres. The cost of management is being borne by the Indian Central Jute Committee. The Bengal Government has provided a working capital of Rs. 4,000 to each of these societies. There are also grading parties attached to the societies and the cost is borne by the Indian Central Jute Committee. The main object of the societies is to teach grading to the growers and to show how to improve the quality of jute so that they may realise better price. The societies receive jute of their members and after grading sell it to the local balers who appear to be sympathetically disposed towards them. The Belakoba society has made a profit of Rs. 1,800 and the Sarisabari society Rs. 2,300. After allocation to the Reserve Fund under the Co-operative Societies Act the major portion of the profits is proposed to be distributed as bonus to the members. If these societies prove successful more such societies are proposed to be organised in other parts of the jute-growing areas.

Increased attention is also being paid to the development of the industrial side of the movement. Two Industrial Unions were organised during the year. The total number of such Unions now is 12. There is a Special Assistant Registrar with expert qualification in charge of these societies and he is assisted by a staff consisting of a Marketing Officer and 6 weaving experts and 13 weaving supervisors. The activities of the industrial societies have increased as will be evidenced by the fact that they produced textiles worth Rs. 2 lakhs 94 thousand and made a profit of Rs. 23 thousand as against Rs. 2 lakhs 49 thousand and Rs. 14,000 respectively. The industrial side has been greatly benefited by the Government of India grant for handloom industries. Rupees 6 lakhs 29 thousand have so far been received from this source.

A conference of Assistant Registrars and prominent non-officials interested in the development of cottage industries was convened in November last and was presided over by the Minister in charge. A comprehensive scheme is under preparation for large scale improvement in the conditions of cottage industries in Bengal. The department has secured orders for textile goods to the value of about Rs. 8 lakhs from the Additional Directorate-General of Supplies, Bombay, and these orders will be distributed amongst the weavers' co-operaitve societies. More such orders are likely to be received if the present order can be executed to the satisfaction of the authorities.

After the expiry of the Government of India grant the Co-operative Training Institute is now being maintained out of provincial revenues. The

scheme of Co-operative Education has been further strengthened by appointment of 5 peripatetic instructional units for the 5 Commissioners' Divisions. They are holding refresher courses for the departmental officers as well as for the officers of the Central and other important Banks who have already received their training in the Institute and also educate the members of the village societies in the principles and practice of co-operation. The appointment of these peripatetic instructional units marks a distinct advance in the development of the scheme for Co-operative Education.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand for Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to improve the working of the rural co-operative societies and the Provincial Co-operative Bank. Sir, year after year we had invited the attention of the Hon'ble Minister concerned as also of the House to the serious set-back to which the rural societies in Bengal were subjected during the last few years. We had also on the floor of the House submitted certain concrete proposals for the improvement of the Co-operative Department as a whole and in particular for improving rural credit. Unfortunately, Sir, in spite of the very long narration of the Hon'ble Minister in charge the experience that we have in the rural areas is that rural credit has gone shrunk and today the position of the agriculturist is far worse than what it was five years ago. Under the circumstances it is only logical and fair that we in the House should be in a position to know what the new Hon'ble Minister in charge is doing.

It is nearly a year, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister in charge has been at his task and we find that although hopes were entertained the position of the rural societies has gone from bad to worse. Sir, during the last two years a large number of new officers were appointed and the difficulties that the department had put up as standing in the way of reforms were largely removed. We had also passed a new legislation giving wide powers to the Provincial Registrar and his men, and yet we find today the position of rural societies continues to be still as bad as before.

I would not today dilate upon the number of instances of defalcation, of frozen assets and of bad and careless handling of funds by a number of societies. These are too numerous to enumerate. I would only confine myself to the general observation that in spite of the activities of the department rural credit has not improved and rural societies have not shown any enlivened situation. Furthermore, Sir, I feel that so far as the Provincial Co-operative Bank is concerned the management which now calls for immediate attention as has been the experience of the last few years has not been revised. We have also found that Government is proposing to start on new schemes. Some of these schemes had been on the anvil for some time past, and particularly I would mention, as I have already given notice of in a subsequent cut motion, the Land Mortgage Banks. Sir, in those new ventures that we notice we do not find any active attempt to solve the problem

of multiple societies. We had been on the floor of the House clamouring for consumers' societies, for extending the principles of co-operation to cottage industries and to other directions. We have not had so far any indication of actively solving these problems by the department.

I submit also that so far as the subvention that the Government of Bengal had undertaken to bear, with regard to the Provincial Co-operative Bank, goes, it is now time that a revision should be made in the policy that was at one time pursued and if the Provincial Co-operative Bank now shows no definite sign of improvement, a committee should be appointed to investigate into its affairs and to see if any further reforms are needed in its management and administration. Sir, I feel that the welfare of our province, particularly the rural areas, depends largely on the improvement of co-operation. The co-operative movement in Bengal compared to other provinces, particularly Bombay and Madras, has been in a very backward position, and yet, Sir, we do not find any attempt to improve the situation.

A few years ago we had certain experts sent for studying conditions in other provinces and also certain members went outside India for special studies. It is unfortunate, Sir, that one officer, a senior officer, who was given definite training in the handling of the Co-operative Department and who was subsequently chosen to hold the high office of the Registrar was subsequently for reasons best known to the Government transferred to another department. We are not aware why is it that this change was effected. If political choice or political likes and dislikes have come in the way, we must be in a position to know what politics was involved in sending one officer, specially trained for undertaking this work, to some other place. The House may be well aware that large powers are vested in the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, and on the choice of the Registrar depends the success or failure of the entire department. There are many brilliant men in the Civil Service who would be only too happy to serve the province in the capacity of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies and who would also acquit themselves very well and yet we are not aware of any consistent policy of Government in placing the right type of persons to the right places. Once you put in somebody in charge of the Co-operative Department, it is only fair that you should give him a chance for a pretty long period of time. Government should not, as they do in other departments, change the officers off and on, because the Registrar is the pivot of the whole Co-operative Department, and if they make a good choice, they should stick to the same and leave him some opportunity to do good to the people through a well organised and well planned co-operative movement in the province.

With these words, Sir, I move my motion and I would leave my friends to follow me and, in particular, I would request the Speaker to permit Mr. Sen to supplement me.

Khan Bahadur AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion to raise a

discussion for the failure of Government to scale down debts of the borrowers of the Co-operative Societies according to their paying capacity and float loans on debenture scheme.

Sir, when the Co-operative Act was on the legislative anvil, it was given to understand that loans of all borrowers would be scaled down to the paying capacity of the borrowers and the Central Bank will be financed by issuing debentures.

Accordingly, a sub-committee was formed to consider the question which after a laborious task submitted their report which was examined by the Co-operative Department and it was also given to understand that the matter was placed before the Government for final consideration, but two years have elapsed and nothing has been done as yet. Just now the Hon'ble Minister says that the scheme will not be workable on account of present difficulty of the money market on account of the war.

As debts of co-operative societies are not within the purview of the Money-Lenders Act, poor debtors are being asked to pay much more than principal as interest, and rate of interest in village societies is still very high and in many cases the properties of these poor debtors are being sold in execution of decrees and awards. There are some co-operative debt settlement boards but there these debtors cannot get relief as in ordinary boards, as almost in every such board Inspectors or Auditors of Co-operative Credit Societies are Chairmen and the majority of the members of these boards are eager to look more to the interest of the Co-operative Banks and societies than the cases of the individual member. Moreover, now condition of the majority of the members of the village societies are so bad that they are half starved, half naked and on the verge of starvation; it is not possible for them even to pay their dues settled by these boards by way of instalments. Certificates are being issued for default of *kists* and certificate officers refuse to give sufficient time to pay off their dues in better days. It is not that individual members are only in difficulty; so also the whole society is in difficulty as it cannot meet the demands of the Central Banks. The assets of almost all Central Banks are thus frozen and they can hardly pay their depositors or to the Provincial Bank; so credit has greatly shaken. If Government do not come to the rescue the whole movement is bound to collapse.

I shudder to think the inevitable consequence which is likely to follow if this movement fails for apathy of the Government. Owing to the passing of the Money-Lenders Act and operation of Debt Settlement Boards people can hardly get any loan from local *mahajans*. The only course open for these poor people is to sell their lands and save them from impending starvation, but the majority of the cultivators will be turned as landless labourers. If these cultivators who are the backbone of the societies are crippled in this way the whole rural structure is surely to be doomed for ever.

I request the Hon'ble Minister through you, Sir, to reconsider the question of debenture scheme.

With these few words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Maulvi Kazi ABUL MASUD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of my motion is to raise a discussion about (1) debenture scheme, (2) short-term crop loan, (3) minimising the rate of audit cess, and (4) provincialisation of the services of the supervisors of the Central Banks.

Sir, when the country is faced with an alarming situation, when all other credit facilities have been dried up, when cultivators badly require money not for luxuries but only for productive purposes to meet the bare cost of cultivation they have been deprived of the fullest advantage of short-term crop loan which is the only credit facility available to them.

The sum of Rs. 30 lakhs has been advanced to the Central Banks to meet short-term crop loan though there was a provision of Rs. 60 lakhs in the last year's budget. Members of the co-operative societies have been hard hit due to this callous attitude of the Ministry.

Rupees 25 has been fixed as the maximum loan to be advanced to a member. This, I think, is a sheer injustice to many *jotedars* who happen to be members of the co-operative societies and the maximum amount should be raised to Rs. 50.

Where land mortgage banks have not come into operation members find it a very difficult job to meet the bare cost of cultivation with a paltry sum of Rs. 25. In spite of 30 years' efforts, barely 6 per cent. of the entire population are in some way or other connected with this movement. There is ample scope of expansion of its activities in different directions. Experience has clearly shown that if there be expansion of societies with sufficient care and caution there is nothing to lose. Bengal Government can easily secure money for a short period on treasury bills with a nominal interest varying from 8 annas to 11 annas. If Government raises a loan to the extent of Rs. 3 crores and if this amount is utilised in expanding societies it would be of immense benefit to the agriculturists of this province.

Now, Sir, with regard to debenture scheme provided in sections 33 and 34 of the Bengal Co-operative Societies Act, 1940, no decision has yet been reached by the Ministry. With reference to this scheme the Hon'ble Minister in the last Budget Session said: "A scheme for the rehabilitation of the co-operative societies is under examination of the Government. As soon as the scheme is approved by Government effect would be given." Twelve months have since elapsed but still we are quite in the dark about the decision. Responsible officers appointed to examine the assets of the societies thought good, and detailed statements from all the societies have been taken to ascertain to what extent guaranteed debentures can be issued. The scheme as drawn up by the Registrar has already been approved by the Reserve Bank of India.

The interest on deposits of the Central Banks has been stopped. The depositors are quite willing to forego a substantial part of their principal money even at the rebate of 50 per cent., but the financial position of the Central Banks does not permit to meet this legitimate demand of the depositors. When no other alternative is left open, the depositors are compelled to take resort to the civil courts. To inspire confidence, to stop onrush of the depositors to the civil courts and to give an impetus to the Central Bank to receive fresh deposits, the debenture scheme should be implemented as soon as possible. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has just now stated that Special Debt Settlement Boards have been established and several lakhs of rupees have already been provided. But you know, Sir, that the working capital of the Central Banks is several crores of rupees and it would take several years to get the whole amount settled by the co-operative special debt settlement boards; and if this be the decision of the Ministry that after the settlement of debts by the Debt Setlement Boards the debenture scheme would be taken up then I submit, Sir, that the debenture scheme would never be taken up. At the present time the audit cess is assessed on the basis of working capital to the extent of 10 annas per hundred. This has told heavily upon the members of the Co-operative Societies and to realise these dues from the members certificate procedure under the Public Demands Recovery Act is adopted and coercive measures are taken against the members. This procedure has made the movement very much unpopular and the word "co-operation" has become a misnomer Till the 31st March, 1939, surplus audit cess lying with the department was Rs. 9,22,802, and now I understand it has accumulated in the neighbourhood of 11 lakhs. Government should contribute a major portion, if not entirely, to meet the establishment of the auditing staff. Audit cess may be assessed on the basis of net profit or in the alternative the rate should be reduced to 5 annas per hundred on the working capital.

Supervisors of the Central Banks are the real backbone of the co-operative movement, but all sorts of privileges which they can legitimately claim have been denied to them. There has been much agitation for provincialisation of their services, but it is deplorable that no consideration has been given to it. The entire structure of the movement will collapse if their valuable services are not properly recognised. The proposal to absorb 50 per cent. of the auditors from the supervising staff has not yet materialised.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Masud, your time is up.

Maulvi Kazi ABUL MASUD: Sir, I will just finish. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India rightly observed that "the attempt to devolve the work of supervision on Central Banks has proved a failure and we consider it desirable that finance and supervision should be under separate control." There is also provision under section 81 of the Bengal Co-operative Societies Act, 1940, to have a constitution of an authority to supervise the working of co-operative societies. A separate machinery to place under its disposal the services of the supervisors should be immediately

set up. Besides supervision the duty of the supervising staff would be to educate the members and to teach them the principles of thrift and self-help. To enhance the prestige of the Central Banks, to save the co-operators from financial ruin, to regenerate and to revitalise the movement, all these factors should be taken into immediate consideration. If co-operative movement fails, there will fail the best hope of rural Bengal.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the scheme for establishing more Land Mortgage Banks. I have little to add to what I have already said in connection with the other cut motion, but I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge the whole scheme of Land Mortgage Banks because we have had in the past a very sad experience of Land Mortgage Banks in Bengal.

Sir, the Land Mortgage Banks that were at one time introduced were not on the initiative of those who were going to benefit therefrom and as such they had no co-operative principle behind them. After some time it was noticed that most of them came to grief. Only one bank ultimately survived and another bank could be kept alive with great difficulty. Thereafter, Sir, an officer of this Government along with some other persons made special study of the Land Mortgage Banks in Madras. I am aware of the various difficulties involved in preparing a full-fledged scheme of Land Mortgage Banks in this province. Therefore I seek information about the present scheme and as to how Government propose to avoid pitfalls that are necessarily likely to follow from the establishment of such banks. In the rural areas I realise only five, six or seven Land Mortgage Banks will not help, but we require for these areas a very large number of Land Mortgage Banks because after the passing of the Money-Lenders Act credit there has practically vanished. On the success of the present number of Land Mortgage Banks depends very largely the welfare of rural Bengal, and that is all the more reason for informing the House about the entire scheme. I would particularly like to know how, to what extent and on what general principles these Land Mortgage Banks are likely to be administered: how is the Government proposing to have the management of these banks left in the hands of the Directors: what is the guarantee that the Government has now devised to see that expert knowledge and as far as possible banking experience may be brought to the services of the newly-constituted Land Mortgage Banks. And further I would like to know whether there is any guarantee going to be obtained from these banks that if they obtain large advances from the Government either direct or through the Provincial Co-operative Bank they would be in a position to repay these advances with proper interest in time. Hitherto we have had experience of remissions; particularly when we are confronted with rural people there is a sort of secret sympathy lurking in the mind of everybody

that any amount advanced to our agriculturist population need not be realised. This is a very dangerous psychology, and I feel that when you have Land Mortgage Banks established with the money furnished by Government there should be better arrangements for realisation and stricter supervision over realisation would be necessary in order to see that these banks succeed. Furthermore, I am not quite sure what system of guarantee Government would evolve to find out that there would not be any reckless investment. We have certain very good books on this and in particular I had invited the attention of Government last year to a book by Dr. Quairaishi, and I would invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to that book once more. There the principle of State Bank has been very elaborately examined and the manner in which similar advances are made in different countries within the British Empire has been examined. It is a very illuminating book from which much can be learnt. I submit the House is entitled to know on what basis the Government is proceeding.

Sir, I do not want to move this motion as a motion with a view to criticise an act of Government. The Government is proceeding on a new scheme and has only started a new lease of life for some of these old banks. I would like to know from Government the details of what the Government is proposing to do.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to speak on the motion just moved by my honourable friend Mr. Abul Masud. So far as co-operation itself is concerned, I would speak something about short-term loan. Last year also during the Budget Discussion I spoke about the crop loan or, as is generally known, short-term loan. In the current year the Government advanced 30 lakhs of rupees as crop loan or short-term loan. Though the provision during the year was for 60 lakhs of rupees, at page 90 of the Red Book it is seen that in the revised estimates it was only 30 lakhs of rupees that was provided, and they have provided 60 lakhs of rupees for the coming year for crop loan and for advances to co-operative multi-purposes societies and other societies. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister what amount has been specifically earmarked for crop loan. This year there is dearth of money everywhere, especially in the jute-growing areas, where the agriculturists had to sell their jute at a very cheap price, and over and above the money that Government intended to advance to them could not be advanced. So, the need for short-term loan in jute-growing areas, especially, is very great. Sir, I speak for my own district of Mymensingh where people are clamouring for short-term loans, but Government, I find, have provided only Rs. 60 lakhs out of which they also intend to finance other societies like multi-purposes societies. My request to Government is that they should provide much more money for crop loan. Then there is another difficulty. When applications are made for crop loans, a loan of Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 only is given; in some cases Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 was advanced. Sir, such sums are ridiculously low for the purpose of crop loans, for with such amounts the agriculturist can do nothing. In any case, therefore, if advances are to be given the amount should not be below Rs. 25.

Then, Sir, I have some suggestions to offer in connection with the Land Mortgage Banks. From the Red Book it appears that last year Government provided Rs. 7 lakhs, but in the present estimate for 1943-44 they have provided only Rs. 3,50,000. The Hon'ble Minister has just now stated that Government have started four more banks in addition to the five banks which have been in existence in the whole of Bengal for some years past. Sir, in the district of Mymensingh with a population of 60 lakhs there is only one Land Mortgage Bank. You can well imagine, Sir, how it is possible for one bank to advance money to a population of 60 lakhs. Moreover, Sir, the amount placed at the disposal of the Land Mortgage Banks is ridiculously low which cannot do justice even to a small fraction of the people who file applications for loans. So, I request the Hon'ble Minister to see, now when credit in rural areas has almost dried up, that both the number of as well as the amounts placed at the disposal of each of these banks be increased. I also suggest that on the experience gained by the existing five Land Mortgage Banks now working in the province for the last three or four years more such banks should be started and more money should be placed at their disposal.

So far as the crop loan is concerned, Sir, I would request the Government to see that such loans are given in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* because in the jute-growing areas people will need money to purchase paddy and jute seeds and unless loans are given in *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* they will be of no avail. I may in this connection draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to one point and that is that the Central Banks are not at all sympathetic towards the agriculturists in giving the crop loans. Sir, the crop loans have to be secured through the agency of the Central Banks. But some of the Directors are not in favour of giving this loan on the ground that it does not give any benefit to the Central Bank; on the other hand, it impedes the realisation of the old debts. In my own subdivisional town of Kishoreganj the Central Bank authorities are not at all anxious or willing to give crop loan, but the agriculturists themselves on account of the absence of other credit agencies have to approach the Central Bank for such loan. I would therefore urge the Hon'ble Minister to see that Central Banks do not show apathy in giving loans to the agriculturists.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion moved so ably by my honourable friend, Maulvi Kazi Abul Masud. The motion has raised several issues. I would like to confine myself to the consideration of two items only, viz., item No. (2) relating to "short-term crop loan" and item No. (4) which relates to provincialisation of the services of the supervisors of the Central Banks. So far as short-term crop loan is concerned I need hardly say that these crop loans are doing yeoman's service to the poor agriculturists because it is given at a time when the agriculturists have no money in their hands and when they require money very badly for raising crops. It was painful to see that last year the short-term crop loan that was advanced was too inadequate. This year also the money that has been provided, if I may say so, is grossly inadequte. I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in

charge of the Department that some hardships are being caused by some Central Banks throughout the province. Sir, I am speaking regarding issue of certificates under the Public Demands Recovery Act. Sir, I have received copies of notices issued in Comilla. These notices show that they have been served upon the poor agriculturist debtors for realisation of their co-operative debts under section 62 of the Co-operative Societies Act, 1940. You know, Sir, and the House also knows that great hardship is caused to the judgment debtor or the certificate debtor when the certificate is issued. The procedure is a summary procedure and no decree is passed. Only a notice is given for 30 days, after which a peon goes and seizes any article, foodstuff, cattle or anything else that is available in the House of the certificate debtor. So far as the Burichang and Devidwar thanas in the district of Tippera are concerned—it is known to everybody—the entire crop there was damaged by the flood caused by the breaches in the Gumti embankments and the local people are practically on the verge of famine. Many of these people cannot have a full square meal a day. In this state of affairs if these certificates are not stopped, then this will mean great hardship to the poor certificate debtors My submission, therefore, is to ask the Hon'ble Minister to see to the matter and to issue immediate orders to call back the certificates, otherwise this will mean ruination of these certificate debtors, who are starving and dying.

With regard to the other item namely, provincialisation of the services of the supervisors of the Central Banks, you are perhaps aware, Sir, that there is an assoiation called "The All-Bengal Co-operative Societies' Supervisors' Association." The Secretary of that Association sent a representation to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department on the 2nd January, 1943, in which several issues have been raised, several demands have been made and their grievances have been put forth. I have no time to refer to these things in the course of my speech here, but I would only refer to one or two items now. An inaugural conference of the Association was held on the 16th March 1940, under the presidentship of the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, in which several resolutions were passed. There were many resolutions which were adopted. I would only refer to one. It is this: "That the appointment of auditors in future be made to the extent of 75 per cent. from among the supervisors and the Government be moved to this effect." In pursuance of this resolution Government have been moved, but no effect has been produced up till now. I would make certain suggestions for the consideration of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department for the betterment of the supervisors because these people are the backbone of the movement. They organise societies; they invest money; they collect money. So practically they are the backbone and their lot should be bettered, if possible.

Sir, these are certain suggestions. Since the Government has not given effect to section 81 of the Bengal Act XXI of 1940 in constituting a supervising union, the services of the supervisors should be provincialised under the direct control of the Government on a uniform scale of pay with a provision of contributory provident fund system.

The scale of pay should be fixed from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 with biennial increment of Rs. 5, provided that officers who have put in more than 10 years' service should be given a starting pay of Rs. 70 per month.

Since there are many qualified officers among the supervisors of different Central Banks it is meet and proper to fill 80 per cent. of the posts of auditors by promotion from qualified and efficient supervisors.

As recruitment of auditors was stopped for several years many senior and efficient supervisors did not get any chance of promotion, thereby most of them have crossed 40 years of age, and thus have become barred for nomination for promotion according to the present policy. In consideration of the above facts, the age-limit for nomination should be removed.

For the above reason and to provide proper and adequate representation direct recruitment of auditors should be stopped for the next five years and all vacancies should be filled up by promotion from supervisors.

For the senior supervisors who are getting Rs. 40 or more as pay it will be financially a losing concern for them to become assistant auditors, so the posts of assistant auditors should be abolished and the supervisors should be promoted direct to the rank of auditors.

In case the abolition of the post of assistant auditors be not possible, direct recruitment of assistant auditors should be discontinued and all recruitment should be made from the supervisors who are getting less than Rs. 40 as pay and whose length of service does not exceed ten years.

Sir, before I take my seat I would request the Hon'ble Minister in charge to look to the hard lot of these poor people, that is, the supervisors who are practically the backbone of the movement. Their fate has to be bettered, and I hope the Hon'ble Minister will kindly see to this sympathetically.

Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in rising to offer a few comments on the various motions brought forward in this House this afternoon I must first ask myself what was the mission of this Co-operative Department, how far this department has succeeded in fulfilling that mission, if it has not succeeded in fulfilling that mission, whether there is any utility of this department at all, and if there is utility of the department still now, in what way and in what direction this department should act in order to achieve that object.

Sir, when this movement was started in this country it was thought that the mission of this movement would be to promote the welfare of the rural population, that the Co-operative Department should educate the people in the art of thrift, that it should be their guide, their brain, their adviser, that it would teach people in such a way that they should be able to free themselves from the clutches of crafty *mahajans* and to stand on their own legs gradually. When the societies were first started, the officers of the Co-operative Department gave high hopes that they would be the brain and that they would guide the members and show them the way how they can make their fortune. For some time they did so, but they did so while loans were taken and loans were repaid. So long as this sort of transaction

continued, both the department as well as the societies were very happy. But with the change of time the miseries of the cultivators came and these friends, these guides of theirs no longer remained their friends; they became oppressors. Indeed they have now become an engine of oppression; they no longer go to the people to teach them in what way they can improve their lot. These poor cultivators entirely depend upon the officers of the Co-operative Deparment for sound advice and for sound guidance, but what are they doing? They have simply snatched away these poor people from the hands of the *mahajans* as a result of which village credit has been destroyed and they are now totally at the mercy of the officers of the Co-operative Department. These officers go to the mufassal in order to collect their money. They do not care for a while whether these people are at all in a position to pay their dues; whether they are able or not is not now the lookout of the Co-operative Department; their only lookout is to get money whether the people can pay it or not. They snatch away their wherewithal, they do not leave even sufficient food for them. Boats are taken away if they cannot find money. Their methods are not less oppressive than the crafty Kabuli *mahajans*.

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are several cut motions and one is from my honourable friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal regarding Land Mortgage Banks. Regarding the Land Mortgage Banks I would like to inform the House that five Land Mortgage Banks were first established all over the province and except the Bank of Jessore all the banks were doing well and the remaining four were practically independent and became self-sufficient. About a year ago the Provincial Bank, through which the Land Mortgage Banks were being financed, stopped their investment and as a matter of fact all these four Land Mortgage Banks ceased to make any new investments. Government was carrying on negotiations with the Provincial Bank as to how payments could be made to the Land Mortgage Banks either directly or through the Provincial Bank. The correspondence and negotiations took a longer time, and we are still in doubt whether the Government has come to a final decision as to whether the Provincial Bank would invest money to these Land Mortgage Banks and examine the cases as before. Only a few deys ago we came to understand that the matter has been settled and the case is now pending before the Finance Department, and it may be that if the Finance Department approves some schemes, the Land Mortgage Banks may get money and they may go on, but there is one difficulty. Sir, I like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge that for several months past this Co-operative Department has got no Secretary of its own. We find that only one Secretary has been doing the work of several departments—Agriculture, Education, Co-operative, Rural Indebtedness, and what not. All along previously Government was used to engage one Secretary or one Joint Secretary for this Co-operative Department. There is no denying the fact that it is the only department through which Government can make all sorts of propaganda either for "Grow More Food" campaign or any other village improvements or rural

reconstruction, but the Government, we think, is quite indifferent towards this department and this department has become a collecting and money-lending department. I, therefore, like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister and say that he should get from the Government a wholetime Joint Secretary for this department to advise him to initiate policies and carry on the work smoothly. If this is not done, if Government is unsympathetic towards this department, then no I. C. S Secretary or B. C. S. Secretary, either Indian or European, can improve this department, because Secretaries will always be the right persons to initiate Government policies and to go on with those policies. Without any Secretary for this department, no Registrar, no competent man can make this department a success.

Sir, these Land Mortgage Banks were doing immense good to the country. A huge number of people could through these Land Mortgage Banks liquidate their debts for which they were trying for many years. Before the Land Mortgage Banks were opened last year the managers were practically sitting idle without doing anything, as no money has yet been advanced to these banks.

Under these circumstances, I would request the Hon'ble Minister in charge to see that he can arrange and make the Government feel that this department should be maintained and should proceed with its work.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after my opening speech I do not think that I require to give any detailed replies to the various points raised by the honourable members on different matters relating to the Co-operative Department.

Sir, a question was raised as to the procedure of advancing short-term loans. As for the amount, my honourable friend Maulvi Muhammad Israil has said, "What is the amount provided for in this year's budget?". Out of Rs. 60 lakhs only Rs. 7 lakhs have been allotted for multi-purposes. So it can easily be understood that Government can spare up to Rs. 50 lakhs for short-term loans. In the previous year Rs. 60 lakhs were provided in the budget, but more than Rs. 44 lakhs could not be spent. So practically there will not be any want of money and Government will be prepared to spend as advance any amount which will be absolutely necessary for the improvement of agriculture or for helping the agriculturists of Bengal at the time of cultivation.

Now, the procedure is that the Provincial Bank advances these loans to the Central Banks on requisition from them. It is the Central Banks who decide what amount they would require each year for each Central Bank and on their requisition the Provincial Bank advances money to them and they distribute the money amongst rural societies and this distribution task is actually done by the rural societies. If these rural societies think that a man is in need of Rs. 10 only, I cannot ask the Government to pay him Rs. 20 by way of loan. The policy of Government cannot be to increase the debts of the cultivators rather to reduce them. What is essentially necessary for these cultivators at the present moment is to help them to be independent in the matter of cultivation.

Now, regarding raising of the maximum amount from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50, for an ordinary cultivator in Bengal Rs. 25 is quite sufficient for the purpose of purchasing seeds and other things. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Not for purchasing cattle.) This advance is not meant for big *jotedars* who possess thousands and thousands of acres of land. It is meant for ordinary cultivators only. As yet I have not received any complaint from any of the rural societies or any of the Central Banks asking Government to raise this maximum amount from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50. This is the first time that I heard it from the honourable member. If I feel that this amount should be raised, if there is a genuine demand from the rural societies, then in that case Government will certainly consider this matter.

As for issuing certificates for the realisation of short-term loan, a question has been raised by Mr. Mafizuddin Ahmed of Tippera. Only a few days ago I received a petition rather a representation from certain persons of the district of Tippera as well as from the district of Chittagong that on account of flood or some other causes they could not get crops and therefore they were not in a position to pay short-term loans. Of course I have sent that petition to the District Officers for an enquiry and report. If, as a matter of fact, I receive a report substantiating the satement made in the petition that really these people are not in a position to pay their short-term loans, then Government will certainly consider that and time will be extended to them.

One thing I must mention here. I hear that people are generally very reluctant to pay their debts. If they can avoid payment, they will try their best to do so. This should not be the policy of the people at large. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: There was flood, there was distress.) If they pay their dues in time, they can expect to get money again. If the advances come back to the Government purse, they may again be distributed to them. If they withhold payment, Government will find it difficult in advancing short-term loans in future. Of course Government will sympathetically deal with the cases of those particular cultivators who cannot really pay back their dues and as a matter of fact they are doing that.

As for the short-term loans of course Government is advancing loans to almost all the districts excepting the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and part of Tippera. This year on account of the war conditions prevailing there I think no honourable member would request Government to take that risk. But the Revenue Department will advance agricultural loan to those cultivators who will demand it, provided there is genuine necessity for it and the authorities recommend the same.

Now, Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you take a long time? It is now prayer time, and I will have to adjourn the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is not fair, Sir. We want to know something about Land Mortgage Banks.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: The Hon'ble Minister has not given anything new. We want to know whether Government have got any new scheme.

Mr. SPEAKER: How long do you want to take?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Five minutes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Let him take five minutes after the prayer.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As for the Provincial Bank I have already said——

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: We want a reply on the debenture scheme.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already made a reference in my speech to the debenture scheme, and I have said that the scheme has not been accepted by the banking experts, the Reserve Bank, or by the Government. In its place a rehabilitation scheme has been drawn up, and we have received sanction from the Finance Department and it will be put up before the Cabinet as early as possible. That will help a good deal the Central Banks and other rural societies in the discharge of their duties.

Now, as for the Land Mortgage Banks my honourable friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal said that these banks were not working well. We have also just heard from the Chairman of one of the Land Mortgage Banks. As a matter of fact, out of the five Land Mortgage Banks started a few years back four are working successfully and satisfactorily. Only the Jessore Bank is not working well. A few months back I extended the jurisdiction of the Jessore Bank and Narail has been included. I hope it will also work well now.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the definition of "working well"?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: They are advancing money after due enquiry and collections are being made——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the question about the functioning of the Land Mortgage Banks was raised in the Public Accounts Committee which had reported a few months ago, and they discovered that although technically four had just been keeping their heads above water they were not serving the people to any appreciable extent.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course they are not serving the people to any appreciable extent. There may be a hundred persons who want loans from the Land Mortgage Banks and these banks within their financial capacity cannot serve so many people. Whatever amount is advanced by way of loan I want a guarantee that these investments are good and are on sound financial basis. I can assure

my friends that these Land Mortgage Banks are not advancing money recklessly here and there, and so I said they are working well.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Have you any new scheme after so much investigation, or only the old scheme?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The old scheme, but it is in the contemplation of Government, as some honourable members pressed for it, to extend the number of Land Mortgage Banks. It is in the contemplation of Government to start at least one Land Mortgage Bank in each subdivision of every district.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: When will it be done?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: When the financial position of the Government will be better: it depends upon the condition of the war. I can give no idea about it now.

Then, as for the Provincial Co-operative Bank, I have already stated that a banking expert is going to be appointed for looking after its affairs and to give its authorities necessary instructions and advice; and when that appointment will be made—and I expect that the appointment will be made in a month—the Provincial Co-operative Bank will run well. The banking expert will also consider whether they can take up any other business besides money-lending which they have been doing so long.

Sir, Dr. Sanyal said something about the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. He said that the gentleman or officer who had got training and had been working there for three years was transferred to another department. Of course, during the war period most of our competent officers are being engaged in the Department of Civil Supplies. There most eminent officers are required and his services also have been requisitioned by that department.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: So now the Co-operative Department has been left with bad officers.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The present Registrar of the Co-operative Societies is not a bad officer: he is a senior member of the Provincial Service and has acted as Deputy Registrar for a couple of years. So he has got vast experience in this co-operative movement. He is sound and sober at the same time, and so I think he will not fail to discharge satisfactorily the onerous duties placed upon his shoulders.

As for appointing a man for a considerable number of years, that depends on various circumstances. I also wish that a man with sufficient knowledge and experience of the department should be allowed to continue for a pretty long time. Of course, unless any other circumstances would arise that procedure would be adopted and Government will consider that always.

Then, as for the provincialisation of supervisors, this is a matter which Government are considering very anxiously and carefully, but I must say that the time is not favourable at the present moment for giving effect to

that provision of the Act. Now almost all the members who took part in the debate said that the condition of almost all the Central Banks in Bengal was not very flourishing and prosperous and some of them were in a state of collapse. So I would ask my honourable friends if they would think it desirable to place upon these banks so many provincial service officers. No Central Bank would, I think, welcome the idea. Of course from the point of view of supervisors it may be quite welcome to them, but none of the Central Banks would accept this idea unless and until the rehabilitation scheme is given effect to and the condition is made better. I can assure the House that as soon as the scheme of rehabilitation is given effect to, I shall certainly consider that question and we shall see that their services may be provincialised.

Then, Sir, as for recruitment of auditors from supervisors, of course we have now another grade, assistant auditors. So we cannot promote the supervisors direct to the rank of auditors. It has been the policy of Government to recruit 50 per cent. of these officers—assistant auditors—from the rank of supervisors, of course from qualified men, and 50 per cent. of auditors are being recruited from assistant auditors.

Now, as to the question of age-limit up to 40, I am seriously considering whether the age-limit can be extended. I will consult the Secretary and others on this point.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Kazi Abdul Masud that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Aulad Hossain Khan that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 16,46,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan that a sum of Rs. 16,46,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" was then put and agreed to.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(*After adjournment.*)

Absence of Quorum.

(When the House reassembled after adjournment, attention of Mr. Speaker was invited to the fact that there was no quorum in the House. A warning bell was then given for about a minute after which by counting of heads it was found that there was quorum in the House.)

25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation".

Mr. P. BANERJI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the failure of Government to take effective steps to give real relief to the agriculturists by quick disposal of cases by the Debt Settlement Boards.

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister who hails from the mufassal knows very well that the Debt Settlement Boards are working very unsatisfactorily. Cases are found to be pending even from three to four years, and although we have been expecting that those cases would be finished by the end of the present year, we find at the closing of the year that a fresh lease of life is going to be extended to the Boards by two years so that those cases may be dragged on even for a longer period. Sir, this extension of life of the Boards will only add to the hardship of the people—I mean, the poor agriculturists. I hope the Minister in charge should issue a circular that all cases pending for more than one year should be at once taken up and this inordinate delay must not recur in ordinary cases. I may cite the cases of certain Boards, particularly of the Daulatpur Debt Settlement Board, where cases have been pending for three or four years. The agriculturists came day after day only to hear that there was no quorum present, but sometimes it so happened that although there was no quorum when the agriculturists were present, there was quorum after a short time when the agriculturists, however, had left, and cases were heard *ex parte* and orders passed in the absence of the poor debtors. I request the Hon'ble Minister to make enquiries into the grievances of the people by sending out a circular so that justice is meted out properly to the poor debtors.

Then, Sir, the time is so very hard now that even if any settlement is arrived at, it is not always possible for the agriculturists to pay off their dues by regular instalments. I would therefore suggest that a temporary moratorium should be given and for that purpose a short Bill should be introduced in this Assembly. With these words, Sir, I move my motion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the working of the special Debt Settlement Boards—General and Co-operative. Sir, I do not know why the Government thought it fit to set up special Debt Settlement Boards for dealing with co-operative debtors. So far as the Act of 1935 is concerned, it does not go to show that there was any need for separate boards for dealing with co-operative debtors. If we look

to section 7 of the Act it only provides that some of the powers which may not be given to some of the boards will be given to other boards, viz., special boards which are presided over by Circle Officers. After the passing of the Act Government thought it fit to set up special Debt Settlement Boards to deal with co-operative debtors. This has given rise to a lot of difficulties. Most of these special boards have been set up where there are Central Banks, generally in subdivisional towns or at important centres in the subdivision. Now, the difficulty that is being experienced by co-operative debtors is that they have to go all the way from the mufassal homes to the subdivisional towns to attend to their cases. Then, Sir, after the setting up of the special Debt Settlement Boards, all the cases of the ordinary Debt Settlement Boards have been transferred to special Debt Settlement Boards by a single stroke of the pen. Now there has been heavy accumulation of cases pending with the special Debt Settlement Boards and the poor agriculturist debtor who has to go all the way in the mufassal, sometimes 15 to 20 miles, has been put to a lot of inconvenience. In many instances the cases are adjourned for want of time and the poor agriculturists have to go back to their homes without anything being done in their cases. Sometimes the clerk in charge of such boards want gratification money for fixing a suitable date and for this reason they have to spend money only for securing a date. In many instances cases are dismissed under section 17 of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act for no fault of the debtors. I know of cases——(At this stage the member reached the time-limit.)

Sir, I want two minutes more to conclude my speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Israil, you have got another motion which you can move and speak on both the motions.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: All right, Sir, I shall speak on both the motions in the same speech.

So far as the special Debt Settlement Boards are concerned, they are doing more harm than good to the poor agriculturist debtors. These boards are generally composed of one Inspector or Auditor who becomes the Chairman and two other members belonging to village co-operative societies and two members holding preference shares of the Central Banks. Generally the persons who are selected from the village men do not remain present, and work is carried on by the Inspector and two members representing the special shareholders. Thereby the interests of the co-operative debtors go by default. I can say from my own personal knowledge that decisions and settlements are made not with respect to the paying capacity of the debtors but in many cases it has been done arbitrarily. In some cases for a debt of a thousand rupees they have given eight or even seven instalments, whereas we find that in the civil courts under the Bengal Money-lenders Act the debtors who have no means are entitled to the extent of twenty instalments. I invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to see that settlements are always made on the paying capacity of the debtor, because if the settlements are not made on the paying capacity of the debtor,

the inevitable result is that defaults necessarily follow and certificates issued. This is the reason why special Debt Settlement Boards have become so unpopular in the rural area.

There is another difficulty. When an award is made interest is allowed to run. In the case of Co-operative Debt Settlement Boards interest is allowed to run on the award, whereas in other cases it is not allowed. That goes beyond the capacity of the debtor and that acts as an impediment for the debtor to pay his debt. The Hon'ble Minister is aware that the Bengal Money-lenders Act was not allowed to be applicable to the Co-operative Debt Settlement Boards or to any co-operative debt. If the Bengal Money-lenders Act was applicable, I think no difficulty would have arisen. As that Act is not applicable, I think no interest should be allowed to run on the awarded sum and a settlement should always be made on the paying capacity of the debtor.

There is another difficulty. The debtors who come from the village are not in many cases heard by the Inspector. In many cases they do not dare to speak out before the Inspector or other officers. So they cannot put their case before them and the settlements made consequently are always against the paying capacity. As regards the special Debt Settlement Boards which are presided over by the Circle Officer, four other members are selected from the creditors. They are generally selected from the towns folk because the special Debt Settlement Boards are located in subdivisional or other important mufassal towns. So here also the selection of the members is made in such a way that the representatives of the debtors find no place.

Here I want to invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to another point that in previous years, during the regime of the past Ministry, in the selection of these members, the members of the Legislature of the respective constituencies were taken into confidence and their opinions were consulted. But now I find that so far as the members of the Legislature are concerned they are not at all consulted. The executive in their own way make their choice which in many cases appears to be very unhappy. I agree fully with my friend Mr. P. Banerji that the condition of village-folk has so deteriorated that unless there is a moratorium or unless there is a general order that so much of the amount should be paid, there cannot be any hasty or expeditious settlement and it will not be possible for the villagefolk to pay their entire dues. The Hon'ble Minister has just now said that so far as the scheme of debenture is concerned, Government have given a go-by to it. They are trying to have a rehabilitation of the entire co-operative debts, particularly the old debts. I would urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to see that this rehabilitation scheme should come into immediate operation so that cultivators, particularly the agricultural debors, may have some chance of getting their debts paid through the award of the Debt Settlement Boards.

Sir, I move the next motion.

I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Second Amendment Act.

So far as the special Debt Settlement Boards are concerned, I hope the Hon'ble Minister will see that proper instructions are given to the officers that settlement should always be made according to the paying capacity. I can say that in my own subdivision in Kishoreganj in many cases settlement has been made beyond the debtors' capacity.

I would draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to another point. There is a provision in the Agricultural Debtors Act—section 22—which provides for declaring a debtor an insolvent provided his assets are such that he cannot pay his debt within twenty years or his assets are considered so small that it is not possible for him to pay the debt. Now there are many cases pending before the special Debt Settlement Boards because power under section 22 has not been conferred upon these boards. For this difficulty they had to dismiss these cases under section 17 and after dismissal these poor debtors were dragged to the civil courts by the creditors. I think power should be vested on the special Debt Settlement Boards under section 22 of the Agricultural Debtors Act, so that the power of insolvency which was intended to give relief to them may be taken advantage of by those for whom it is intended.

Now, Sir, I come to the working of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Amendment Act, 1942. That Act, as the House is aware, was passed to give relief to the poor agriculturists who lost their land in auction sale—whether in money decrees or in rent decrees. The Money-lenders Act provided some relief for those lands which were sold in auction for money decrees, but this Act provided both for money decrees as well as for rent decrees. Unfortunately, this Act was brought into force by Government on the 18th June, 1942. Government, however, did not publish or print the forms in which applications are to be submitted for taking back the auction-purchased land and they made inordinate delay in publishing the rules also. Now after six or seven months had elapsed Government made the form available. So, the debtors were prevented from making applications to the Debt Settlement Boards for taking over their auction-purchased lands. My submission to the Hon'ble Minister will be that he should extend the time of enforcement of the Act. The time of enforcement of the Act will be one year from the 18th June, 1942. For six or seven months no forms were available. So people could not make any applications. There was another circular issued by the department that petitions would be entertained only by special Debt Settlement Boards presided over by Special Officers and that other boards could not entertain these applications. Now, Sir, this circular should have been brought to the notice of ordinary agriculturists. Generally they do not know where an application is to be filed. They generally file an application before the ordinary Debt Settlement Board, and the Debt Settlement Officer, when he happens to visit the locality, generally gives directions that it ought to be transferred

to the Special Debt Settlement Officer. In this way, Sir, much time is taken. For this purpose also the time for enforcement of the Act should be extended.

There is another thing, Sir. I have already made it clear that the personnel of special Debt Settlement Offices are generally anti-debtors. So, the interpretation they put on the provisions of the Act is very rigorous. They always try to see that not a single debt is brought within the purview of the Act. As honourable members are aware there are so many clogs put on section 37A which is the operative section of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act that in view of the apathetic attitude of the Debt Settlement Officers it is very difficult for ordinary agriculturists to get their cases admitted. So, I would request the Hon'ble Minister to see that a circular is issued to Debt Settlement Boards that as far as possible liberal interpretation should be put upon the provisions of the Act.

I would invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the fact that for the proper administration of the Money-lenders Act, Government appointed a Special Officer for this purpose. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to appoint a Special Officer for this Act to see that the agriculturists for which specially this Act is intended actually get benefits under the Act and that the Act is properly enforced and the persons for whom the Act is intended get due relief therefrom.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motions to the acceptance of the House.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I want to reply to the points raised by Mr. Israil on the working of the Bengal Co-operative Societies Act. He has pressed for extension of time for the operation of this Act. Now, Sir, he has forgotten that that Act was passed and given effect to on the 18th June, 1942. Simultaneously after that, within a few days, there was a Government notification in which it was stated that it would take some time to bring out the forms and other things and to publish the rules as that required the sanction and approval of the Finance Department, Legislative Department, Revenue Department, etc., but that manuscript forms had been supplied to Debt Settlement Boards which would receive applications in those manuscript forms and when printed forms would be available applications would be received in such printed forms. That notification was issued, and as a matter of fact, Sir, I have got information that many of the special Boards and ordinary Boards have received applications in manuscript forms. So, there is no force in the contention that time should be extended; it cannot be done without an amendment of the Act.

As for relief, I have issued instructions to all Debt Settlement Officers, special, general and ordinary and to Debt Conciliation Officers who are in charge of Debt Conciliation Boards to see that sufficient relief is given. The policy of Government under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act is to give as much relief as possible to the agriculturists.

As for the settlement of awards, etc., that is done strictly according to the paying capacity of debtors. In the course of my tours in the mufassil I inspected some of the ordinary Debt Settlement Boards and enquired of them how files were disposed of, whether they have acted properly or not and wherever I found any defect I brought it to the notice of the members and the Chairmen as well and on my return to Calcutta I issued a circular that such defects must not recur in future. I have taken special care to rectify the defects which I found in any of the boards. Members of these boards do not generally have any legal knowledge or a high standard of intelligence, but we must be content with them for some time at least.

As regards special Boards and special Co-operative Bank Boards, the number has been sufficiently increased at the present time. The number of special Co-operative Boards is 206 and the number of special and general Boards is 139. So, Sir, the number is large enough and wherever there was congestion of cases, on the report of the Debt Settlement Officer we at once started another special Board when a large number of cases were available.

As for the circular about cases under the Second Amendment Act for recovery of possession of auction-purchased lands of the cultivators, a departmental circular has been issued by the Registrar that special Debt Settlement Boards should receive applications. If you go through the provisions of the Act, Sir, you will find that there is no bar for an ordinary Board to receive applications of that kind. As a matter of fact, Sir, it is within my knowledge that a large number of ordinary Boards have received applications. Now why has this been done, because you know, Sir, that ordinary Boards may or may not exist if there is a fall in the number of cases. As no case can be transferred from an ordinary to a special Board, there will be no end of difficulty for the poor agriculturists. Therefore, it has been found desirable in the interests of the debtors themselves that they should be permitted to file their petitions before special Boards. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is it not in contravention of the rules?) I say, Sir, it is desirable in the interests of the debtors that they should submit their applications before special Boards. They are not debarred from submitting their applications before ordinary Boards; there is no legal bar to that. If an ordinary Board is dissolved, the result will be that the cases will be dismissed. So in such cases there is no other alternative but to transfer the cases to special Boards.

(Mr. Abdulla-Al Mahmood rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Let the Hon'ble Minister finish and then you can raise your points.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I was saying, Sir, it is in the interest of the debtors that a circular has been issued to this effect. Again I say that under the law there is no bar for any debtor to submit his petition before an ordinary Board. If it is submitted before an ordinary Board, it will consider it in course of time.

Then, Sir, as regards the formation of general special Boards and co-operative bank special Boards, I may say that in ordinary special Boards

and general special Boards persons are taken from mufassil rural areas and they are allowed travelling allowance also. It is not that only townspeople are selected, but lots of people are selected from the rural population and from the debtors' as well as from the creditors' side. So, these Boards are represented both by debtors as well as by creditors. Now, if a representative of the debtors happens to be absent or he intentionally abstains himself from attending a sitting of the Board, the Board cannot be held responsible for that and the cases cannot be postponed for a long time.

Sir, as for the congestion of cases in special Boards, we have issued strict orders to the special Boards to dispose of cases as quickly as possible. If any Board receives a large number of cases, then it would report to the authorities and the latter would transfer some of the cases to another Board.

Now, in his motion my friend Mr. P. Banerji has pressed for quick disposal of cases. That is also the intention of Government and we have repeatedly sent instructions to all ordinary Boards to dispose of cases as quickly as possible and we are receiving returns of disposal of cases from them. If we find any Board keeping in abeyance cases older than a year, then we draw the attention of the Board to them and issue orders upon them to dispose of those cases which have been kept pending for a long time. So, this is being done and, as a matter of fact, the progress of work done by these ordinary Boards and special Boards has been much more satisfactory than in the previous years.

Then Mr. Banerji has made certain remarks against clerks and other persons. Of course, clerks are ordinary people and if one pays some illegal gratification to these people for his own comfort and own convenience so that he may go earlier, I think he is to blame for this as well as the clerk. But I say, at the same time, that whenever I receive any complaint from any person against any of the members of any of the Boards or against a clerk or even against a Chairman, I take immediate action against him. I order for an enquiry and if, on enquiry, he is found to be guilty, he is dismissed or otherwise penalised. You will find that almost every month someone or other of the members is removed or some Chairmen are removed and new Chairmen are appointed in their places.

As regards consultation with M.L.A.'s at the time of constitution of these Debt Settlement Boards—ordinary or special—if you consider the matter more carefully, you will find that in that case it will be impossible for the District Officer to work because whenever any report is received from the Assistant Registrar or Inspector that the term of a particular Board will expire on a particular day, he will have to reconstitute the Board within a month or as early as possible, otherwise there will be lacuna and the Board will not be allowed to function any more. If he has to consult the M.L.A.'s, then most of the time will be taken up in doing so. Sir, I here openly declare before the House that if any of the honourable members of this House has got any grievance against the constitution of any Debt Settlement Board—ordinary, special or general—and if he brings it to my

notice, I will take immediate action. Every day I have been receiving petitions from one member or another and I have been taking action on them. Whether M.L.A.'s are consulted by District Officers or by Assistant Registrars or not, Government will take their advice here and consider it. If they can make out a proper case for reconstitution of any Board or for change of the personnel of a Board, Government is quite prepared to accept their suggestion. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Why not previous consultation?) I have already said that it will take a lot of time for previous consultation. M.L.A.'s are not always available. Notices will have to be served on them. The term of the Board may expire in the meantime and it will cease to function. That is the difficulty. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: What about moratorium?) Of course, I will consider that. I cannot give any offhand reply. I will examine the question.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, I draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to section 37A(*2*). It enjoins that applications referred to in section 37A(*1*) shall be made to the Board established for the local area within which the debtor ordinarily resides. Now, Sir, Government have established a special Debt Settlement Board which is not situated within the area where the debtor ordinarily resides and generally these are established within an area of 15 or 20 square miles. There is no provision in the Act which entitles Government to establish special Debt Settlement Boards for the entertainment of cases under section 37A. Now, Sir, it has been enjoined that Debt Settlement Boards should be established within the area where the debtor resides ordinarily. The Legislature contemplated that agricultural debtors should be given all facilities so that they might take advantage of section 37A.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, my point is that Government first issued instructions to ordinary Debt Settlement Boards to entertain cases under section 37A. Subsequently Government withdrew those instructions and special Debt Settlement Boards were establised to entertain those cases. As a result of this, an illegality has been committed.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would have been better if you had spoken on this motion so that the Hon'ble Minister could have replied to your point.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, I thought that my friend Mr. Israil would dilate on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: It appears to me that you are now raising a question of law.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Yes, Sir. I am raising the point that there is some difficulty in the order issued by Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it some order or circular?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: It is a circular.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a circular against the express provision of the law. Put that briefly and ask Government whether that is a fact and, if so, whether they are prepared to amend it.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the establishment of special Debt Settlement Boards is in contravention of section 37A(2)?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, I have already explained that point that no circular can contravene any provision of any Act existing in the country. This circular is a mere circular. It has got no mandatory power and it is not at all mandatory. If the debtors like, they may file petitions before special Boards.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: But they are not allowed.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I submit that if I explain the point, Sir, it will help the Hon'ble Minister. The question is that a circular has been issued which permits a man to file an application, either before a special Board or an ordinary Board, and although the Hon'ble Minister says that there is no bar to a man to file an application before an ordinary Board, the actual practice is that the man is not allowed by the officers of the Board to do so but they make him appear before the special Board.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know that. If that is the grievance, the circular clearly says that every debtor has got the opportunity to file an application before the ordinary Board because against the provision of the Act no circular can be issued. Now as it has come to my notice that the officers are not allowing the debtors to submit petitions before ordinary Boards, I will issue a circular to the officers that this should no longer be done.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerji that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan that the demand of Rs. 20,62,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation", was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-52 p.m. till 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 13th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Saturday, the 13th March, 1943, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 187 members.

Want of Quorum.

(After the House assembled when the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq had finished reading out the written answer to starred question No. 135, the attention of Mr. Speaker was drawn to the fact that there was no quorum. The bell was rung and there was quorum.)

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Arrest of certain members of the Bankura District Board.

*135. **Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that Mr. Benoy Krishna Roy, Vice-Chairman of the Bankura District Board, and three other members of it, viz., Mr. Narendranath Bose, Mr. Phanibhusan Chatterji and Mr. Manindrabhusan Sinha, M.L.A., were arrested by the order of the District Magistrate of Bankura under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules on the 26th October, 1942, following a special meeting of the Board;

(*ii*) that on the 27th October, 1942, Vice-Chairman Mr. Benoy Krishna Roy was let off from the thana *hajat*, while the said Mr. Narendranath Bose, Mr. Phanibhusan Chatterji and Mr. Manindrabhusan Sinha, M.L.A., were sent to Midnapore Central Jail for detention under the said Defence of India Rules;

(*iii*) that after review of their papers the Government set aside the order of detention and they were released unconditionally on the 21st November, 1942;

(*iv*) that the District Magistrate of Bankura again put them under arrest under the said Defence of India Rules on the 2nd December, 1942; and

(*v*) that the order was subsequently withdrawn by him after they had suffered confinement for several hours?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the circumstance leading to these proceedings both on the 26th October and on the 2nd December, 1942?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he received any representation or representations alleging the District Magistrate's irregular action in the matter?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The District Magistrate ordered the arrests on those occasions because he believed them to be necessary with a view to prevent the persons concerned from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety and the maintenance of the public order.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Reports from the Commissioner and District Magistrate are under my consideration.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there was any connection between the arrest of these persons and the special meeting of the Board as referred to in question (*a*) (*i*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is one of the matters which is being investigated by Government.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any remedy against these vagaries of the district authorities and the district police?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether he has got the representation and what action has been taken on that representation?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is under consideration.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: How long will the consideration take?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: With the Budget Session on, it is impossible for me to make any promise.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the persons concerned acted in a manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety and the maintenance of the public order?

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean to say, the specific acts which according to the District Magistrate formed the basis of the arrest?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That again is one of the matters which is being investigated.

Security prisoners.

***136. Mr. NAGENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of security prisoners as on the 31st December, 1942;

(*ii*) the number of them that are under the Defence of India Act and Rules made thereunder; and

(*iii*) the number of them that are in receipt of an allowance, if any?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the maximum monthly amount paid to a single prisoner;

(*ii*) the minimum monthly amount paid to a single prisoner; and

(*iii*) whether any other sum is paid for life insurance premium or for other purposes to any such prisoner?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of them that are in receipt of such allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Political security prisoners—1,540.

Criminal security prisoners—2,255.

(*iii*) 149.

(*b*) (*i*) Rs.75.

(*ii*) Rs.6.

(*b*) (*iii*) and (*c*) No payment has so far been made by Government in respect of insurance policy of any prisoner. In the case of 7 such prisoners allowances for *sradh* ceremony of their parents have been sanctioned

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Rs. 6 is adequate for the maintenance of a person's family during these hard times and whether Government are prepared to revise the allowances?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In many cases the allowances granted have been revised, but I cannot make a promise regarding all these prisoners as a whole. Special cases are taken into consideration and special allowances are given.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to questions (*a*) (*i*) and (*a*) (*iii*) whether the Government is considering the desirability of granting family allowance to the other political security prisoners than only 149?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We received representations from time to time and in many of these cases action is being taken. I am not at the present moment in a position to state in how many, but some action has been taken and it is always open to any political prisoner who is aggrieved to ask for a revision of the allowance that is given.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has received any representations from some interned political security prisoners who have come from Khulna to Dum-Dum Central Jail?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have received representations, but I cannot say from which district or districts.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he proposes to take adequate steps for expediting the disposal of the cases for family allowances which are pending before the Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir. It is only because of the preoccupation during the Budget Session that the matter has been delayed.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many such applications are now pending for decision before the Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enlighten the House as regards the difference between political security prisoners and criminal security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Criminal security prisoners are persons having previous conviction.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the figure 149 includes criminal security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: 149 relates to political security prisoners only.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Out of 1,540 political security prisoners Government have been pleased to grant maintenance allowance to only 149. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table petitions for maintenance allowance and the results of the enquiry thereon?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is a mass of information asked for. I cannot place all the reports that I have received on the table, but I am quite prepared to clear up any specific points.

Hand-made paper demonstration.

***137. Maulvi ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Industries Department aware that there is a large demand for hand-made paper demonstration?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he has taken in the matter?

(*c*) If no action has been taken, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department, the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) With a view to ascertain how far hand-made paper will be able to compete with mill-made paper, a scheme for testing the commercial possibilities of manufacture of hand-made paper was sanctioned in the year 1941 for a period of three years. While the possibilities or otherwise of demonstrating the processes of such manufacture can only be examined in the light of the report of the commercial test already undertaken, the Director of Industries has in the meantime submitted a scheme for demonstration in order to meet the present acute paper shortage which is now under consideration.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the price of mill-made paper supplied in the bazar has gone up 400 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That may be so; I cannot say that.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the scheme was submitted to Government by the Director of Industries and at what stage that scheme is lying?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It is now under consideration. This is in the reply given.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Commerce Department of the Government of India have promised a certain amount of support, financial or otherwise, to any local Government for developing hand-made paper industries?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I believe so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the Bengal Paper Dealers' Association have already approached Government for necessary help in promoting hand-made paper industry?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I cannot say "no," but I have no information. I will enquire and let you know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, it is very unfortunate that the Minister in charge should be absent continually and somebody else will answer the questions. I quite feel the difficulty of the Hon'ble Mr. Barman, but our difficulty is also there. The Hon'ble Minister in charge will be continually absent and if by chance any other Minister takes upon himself the responsibility of replying to our questions, it is only fair that he should come prepared with the file and if he is not so prepared then either the question will have to be held over or the Hon'ble Minister will give up the department and allow somebody else to handle the department.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He has answered that he will enquire and let you know.

Mr. C. MORGAN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Government of India in the Commerce Department are testing a new machine for hand-made paper in the United Provinces and when that machine has been tested and made suitable, provinces are going to be communicated with on the subject?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I shall enquire into the matter.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government have taken to popularize making of paper in the mufassal areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have no information.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, it is better to hold over the question when the Hon'ble Minister is not in a position to answer it, because the question is very important.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We will put all the supplementaries.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a fair proposal that all the supplementaries will be put and later on answers might be put on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the best course would be if you put supplementary questions and in those cases in which he will be able to answer here and now he will do so and in those cases in which he will not be able to answer now he will take them as a notice and reply on a later date.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: On a point of information, Sir. In a case where he will take note of and give his answer subsequently, how will the honourable members be able to put supplementaries which may arise out of his answer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I point out one practical difficulty? If the supplementary questions are taken as a notice, what about the supplementaries to the supplementaries? There will be difficulty.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That may for the time being be waived. We are not getting answers even to the original question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us dispose of this question. We shall see to that later on.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Khadi Pratisthan at Sodepur had been in the field of manufacturing hand-made paper for some years and submitted a scheme for large-scale improvements in the hand-made paper industries to the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I shall answer it after enquiry.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the activities of the Khadi Pratisthan in this very important direction have been curtailed because of certain executive action taken by Government against the institution?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I take it as a notice.

Mr. A. F. STARK: The Hon'ble Minister has stated in the reply that a scheme for testing the commercial possibilities of manufacture of hand-made paper was sanctioned in the year 1941. Will he be pleased to state what is the report of this test that has been received by the department?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: So far as I understand no report has been submitted.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he means that there are two schemes which are under the consideration of Government?

Th Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, that is so.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what amount, if any, Government have given as subsidy to these manufacturers of hand-made paper?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Government considering the desirability of giving full scope to the Khadi Pratisthan to function, so that they can develop hand-made paper industries as they have been doing for the last few years?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That is a reasonable request and Government will certainly consider that matter favourably.

Silk Industry in Bengal.

***138. Mr. J. C. Gupta:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department aware—

(*i*) that the silk industry in Bengal was the cause of prosperity in the districts of Murshidabad, Malda and Birbhum particularly and also in the neighbouring districts;

(*ii*) that the industry perished in Bengal due to want of suitable filatures for ensuring uniform and good quality silk;

(*iii*) that one of the causes of the decay of silk industry in Bengal was the deterioration of cocoons and filatures of improved quality; and

(*iv*) that reelers are experiencing difficulties in setting up up-to-date filatures for silk reeling as the necessary parts and apparatus are not available in the market?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, are the Government considering the desirability—

(*i*) of breeding cocoons like Kashmere cocoons in suitable climates in the hills of Bengal; and

(*ii*) of taking steps to make filature parts available to the reelers at reasonable prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Great improvement has been effected recently in this direction by the introduction in this Province of improved hybrid cocoons, named "Nistid" and "Nismo", which are now in general use in the plains. Cocoons of the Kashmere variety can, however, be reared in the hills of Kalimpong subdivision and a scheme for starting and establishing a Sericultural Station at Kalimpong is under consideration.

(*ii*) Under the Government of India's scheme for the establishment of silk filatures in this Province, a Special Officer for Silk and a Reeling Superintendent have been appointed by this Government. They have since prepared a list of machinery parts required for the establishment of filatures and steps are being taken to make them available.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is Government aware that recently the Government of India have issued orders for controlling the price of silk and the trade in silk and empowered the Provincial Government to acquire raw silk and cocoons at prices to be determined by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I take it as notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It has been gazetted and if the Ministers do not know the decisions of Government, then we are helpless.

Mr. SPEAKER: Unfortunately the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department is absent and it was according to some arrangement made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister that these questions are being answered by the Hon'ble Mr. Barman. It is apparent that he has not been able to give you satisfaction, but what do you propose to do under the circumstances?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, may I point out regarding the observation made by my friend Dr. Sanyal that it was not exactly a Government decision as such. Dr. Sanyal knows that when a decision is taken in Cabinet, all the Ministers are expected to know the Government decision. But there are things like departmental decisions which other Ministers may not know. That is my friend's difficulty.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Can any Hon'ble Minister plead ignorance of something which is the order of Government and which has been published in the *Calcutta Gazette*?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is different.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is the point.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Even then there are so many things published in the Gazette—many minor matters do not stick to the memory, but important matters do. If in this particular matter, it has escaped the notice of a particular Minister, I think there is nothing unusual. This is a matter published in the Gazette, so it need not be put.

Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: What I am submitting, Sir, is that it is the most important and public duty of a Minister to answer questions in this House. If for some unavoidable reason—of course it must be an unavoidable reason—the Minister is not able to be present, then satisfactory arrangements should be made to give answers and satisfy the members when supplementary questions are put. Now, we find that in reply to practically every question the Minister who has been entrusted to answer says that he does not know. So, I think it is a serious breach of the privilege of the House and I appeal to you, Sir, to take notice of this and compel Government either to send for the Minister in charge to come or to make some arrangements which will be satisfactory.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The most satisfactory solution would be if my friend Dr. Sanyal would undertake to answer questions. (Laughter.)

Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I protest against the frivolity of the Chief Minister. He must withdraw this

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is no question of withdrawing it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am prepared to take over the file from the Hon'ble Minister and answer questions here and now without salary and without office.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must say in all fairness that the real position is that Dr. Sanyal is perhaps the one honourable member of this House who devotes practically his whole time to his work as a member of this House and he knows many things which many of us do not know and, therefore, it is very difficult for any Hon'ble Minister in this House to cope with him.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I want to make an humble suggestion to the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Here I see that even the Secretary of the department is absent. Can't he compel the Secretary to be here and get his assistance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That was done in olden days when Secretaries were members of this House. They could sit by the side of the Ministers. Now they sit in the gallery and if a Minister turns his face to the Secretary, immediately there is an uproar. Therefore, that cannot be done. However, it is a useful suggestion and it will be considered.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us now turn to the business.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*) (*ii*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that one essential condition of the Government of India's scheme is that the Bengal Government will use extraordinary powers to suppress the price of silk in the province in order to enable the Government of India and His Majesty's Government to obtain silk at a very cheap rate?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have no information at the present moment.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I should like to appeal to you in the name of the members of this House that questions are a part of Parliamentary procedure and the Opposition has the right to demand answers. Sir, please do not allow the Ministers to run away with this cherished privilege of the House. The frivolity shown and the indifference *plus* non-preparation on the part of these Ministers is something of which you should take notice. They should not be allowed to go scot-free and you must put your foot down because today they are running away with our privilege of supplementary questions and tomorrow I do not know what they will do. Therefore, as protector of our rights I beg of you to see that these people do their duty.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, certainly it is my duty to see that the privileges of this House are not in any way curtailed, but I for myself have not yet been able to come to any definite decision as to what are the steps that I can possibly take to compel a Minister to answer a question in a particular way. I think I have not got the power to compel a Minister to answer a question in a particular way. But I will certainly ask the Hon'ble Chief Minister to make arrangemets in a way that will not create this sort of dissatisfaction amongst the members.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, may I just make a submission with regard to the point that has been raised by Mr. Siddiqi——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I thought, Sir, that you had left the point to the Hon'ble Chief Minister. We do not want underlings to come and disturb our privilege with their explanations. The Chief Minister should speak in the name of the Council of Ministers and these individual Ministers who are playing with the privileges of this House should not interfere.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: On a point of order, Sir. Is an honourable member entitled to refer to one of the Hon'ble Ministers as an underling of the Chief Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I may be an underling of the Chief Minister, but I am not a hireling like Mr. Siddiqi of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Is this word "hireling" permissible, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think, Mr. Siddiqi, we have been using expressions which we think we should always try to avoid.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: If you rule, Sir, that the word "underling" is wrong, I have no hesitation to withdraw it. "Underling" is perfectly permissible as a parliamentary expression, but the word "hireling" which has been used by the Hon'ble Minister is unparliamentary and highly objectionable.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If you think the word "hireling" is unparliamentary, I withdraw that word.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister has withdrawn the expression "hireling".

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The reason is that my friend got these papers very late, but I hope from Monday next we will be able to come more fully prepared, and I will see that our Secretaries are in attendance here so that they may give all information that can be given from the files. I think by adopting that procedure we will be able to dispose of the supplementary questions.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, the suggestion made by Dr. Sanyal was eminently reasonable that those supplementary questions which the Hon'ble Minister is not in a position to answer today may be postponed, but there are instances in which Dr. Sanyal in his abundance of knowledge has really been communicating information to the Hon'ble Minister. In such instances, Sir, it is up to the Minister to communicate the information to the department and ascertain its views and then communicate them to this House.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, it is impossible for me to know what had happened in the department in the course of the last four or five or six years, and therefore it is impossible for me to answer all the supplementary questions, even if I am given the file two or three days beforehand. I am prepared, however, to answer supplementary questions generally but with regard to supplementary questions to which I cannot give an answer offhand I shall ask for notice and answer them later.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that on the 8th March, 1943, a letter was addressed to the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, Minister in charge of Commerce and Labour Department, Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, by my humble self, inviting his attention to the provisions of Notification No. 467, dated the 8th March, 1943, whereby a new order was promulgated, empowering the Provincial Government or any person duly authorised by them to restrain every such party as may be specified as owner or trader for selling or disposing of raw silk and that through the Government such a dealer shall be entitled to purchase such part of such stocks as the Provincial Government may require at such prices as may be fixed by the Provincial Government and requesting the Hon'ble Minister in charge not to proceed with the fixation of prices or

giving effect to this order until a conference was called by him of interested producers of silk and dealers in silk so that he may see that no wrong is done to the persons concerned?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I am not aware of that, Sir.

Mr. G. MORGAN: Sir, would it not be possible for these supplementary questions to be noted by the reporters and handed over to the department? The Chief Minister has just stated that he can have these questions more fully answered. These supplementaries are very important, and it would be very much helpful to the department to have copies of these supplementaries so that the Ministers concerned may be given notice. We have no objection to giving notice because the Hon'ble Ministers have always that privilege, but the point is that these supplementaries must be answered and the Chief Minister can so arrange as to enable Mr. Barman to answer the supplementaries on Monday or Tuesday next. If that assurance can be obtained, Sir, I have a supplementary question to ask.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Barman, will you be able to give answers on Monday or Tuesday next?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, I shall try to answer them as early as possible, but I cannot give any definite date on which I will answer them.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: After all he is a Supplementary Minister.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble the Supplementary Minister be pleased——

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you cannot call him the Supplementary Minister.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, he has been called a Supplementary Minister by the Hon'ble Mr. Basu for the purpose of answering these questions. Therefore I have addressed him as a Supplementary Minister.

Will the Hon'ble the Supplementary Minister be pleased to state if he is in a position, either he himself or through the Chief Minister, to let us know if Government is considering the desirability of holding up further action on silk control until the Council of Ministers or the Chief Minister himself has an opportunity of examining the implications thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I remind the honourable member about the representation of which I received a copy and on which I think I had a preliminary discussion with the honourable member also. Some of the important points contained therein are actually receiving our consideration, but the matter has not been taken to the Council of Ministers because I have asked for a departmental enquiry on some of the important points. I know that it is not here in this file, but the matter stands at that stage and we are expediting it. If necessary we may take it to the Council of Ministers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government are considering the desirability of maintaining the market prices of silk before any enforcement or forced attempt to take possession of silk stock from the rearers or weavers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: This is exactly one of the points on which departmental advice has been sought. I am not aware if any advice has been given so far, because I have no information on the point, but if the advice has been given it will be certainly considered.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. It appears to me that we have been wasting the time of the House over unnecessary discussions. Instead of putting questions and obtaining answers we are really discussing matters now, but that is due to the fact that the Hon'ble Minister in charge is unfortunately absent and the matter has been placed in charge of another Hon'ble Minister who, it appears, is not in possession of full facts to give satisfactory answers to the House What I propose in the circumstances to do, so far as the questions that stand in the name of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur are concerned, is that they should be answered by Hon'ble Minister who has been entrusted with them. I wil not take them up today, but I will take them up on Monday, and I hope the Hon'ble Minister in charge, whoever he may be, will please devote a little more care and attention to this matter so that there may not be any further waste of the valuable time of this House. I appeal to the Hon'ble the Chief Minister also to see that proper arrangements are made and in the meantime, we have already gone into question No. *138, and if any honourable member wants to put supplementary questions he may do so; the suggestion made by Mr. Morgan will be followed.

Mr. C. MORGAN: Sir, I do not ask any question of the Hon'ble Minister, because he will have to take notice on this question. Three years ago the person in charge of these cocoons and filatures came to see me in Kalimpong and he suggested that the mulberry tree growing be transferred from Kurseong to Kalimpong and 7 acres of land were taken in Kalimpong for this purpose. I want to ask the Hon'ble Minister what has been done in these 3 years; so far I have seen nothing. I want the department reply on Monday to say what the position is with regard to the transfer of the mulberry plantation from Kurseong to Kalimpong for which land to the extent of 7 acres has been taken because the man in charge of the department told me that the Kalimpong hills are very suitable for the particular mulberry tree.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall enquire and report.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, with reference to the observation made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister I would only mention that on the 16th, when the demand under the Industries Department is going to be taken up, I have a cut motion (No. 26) in which I propose to discuss the scheme of silk improvement, and all these questions will come up. I submit that this motion I intend to take up as a censure motion on Government and we will

go to vote. I give due notice to Government to come thoroughly prepared and to the party behind Government to examine the question before they come to the House so that they may come ready with all information available regarding this.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Medical treatment of security prisoners suffering from various ailments.

40. Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the following security prisoners, namely:—

(*i*) Sj. Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee—ear, throat and nose disease—complete deafness,

(*ii*) Sj. Brojendra Nath Das—sugar in urine—Hæmoptysis—slow fever (5 or 6 times),

(*iii*) Sj. Sushil Deb—eye disease,

(*iv*) Sj. Pratul Gobinda Deb—serious type of eye disease and gastric ulcer, and

(*v*) Sj. Kedareswar Sen Gupta—wasting disease,

are suffering from ailments mentioned against their names?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether those prisoners have been examined by any specialists?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—,

(*i*) when,

(*ii*) where, and

(*iii*) the name of the specialists who examined them?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the diagnosis and prognosis in each case arrived at by the specialists;

(*ii*) the nature of treatments recommended by them; and

(*iii*) whether any treatment is being given to them now?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any effect has been given to the course of treatment recommended by the specialists?

(*f*) If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The nature of ailments of the prisoners and the treatment accorded are shown against each—.

(*i*) Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee—Refraction of ear-drum—Prognosis good if he would have the patience to undergo Valsalva treatment recommended by a specialist.

(*ii*) Brojendra Nath Das—No ailments at present.

(*iii*) Sushil Deb—Astigmatic myopia—corrected by suitable glasses supplied at Government cost.

(*iv*) Pratul Gobinda Deb—No signs of gastric ulcer. For his eye trouble he was examined by a specialist and provided with spectacles.

(*v*) Kedareswar Sen Gupta—Chronic Dyspepsia—examined by a specialist—he is having the prescribed treatment.

(*b*) and (*e*) Yes.

(*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Four in the latter part of 1942, and one in this month in the Medical College Hospitals and by other specialists.

(*iii*) I am not prepared to furnish this information in the public interest.

(*d*) I refer the honourable member to my reply to (*a*).

(*f*) Does not arise.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of answer (*a*)(*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what arrangement has been made for Valsalva treatment to the prisoner in the jail?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware, but I can enquire.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*v*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that security prisoner Kedareswar Sen Gupta, before he was arrested, was examined by a specialist outside who declared that it was a case of intestinal tuberculosis?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of having Kedareswar Sen Gupta examined by a specialist to the choice of his relatives?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, I will do that.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where Brojendra Nath Das has been kept at present?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer without notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of having these security prisoners as well as other security prisoners who are suffering examined by specialists of their own choice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, that is not the rule, and all we can say is that we may consider the question as to why the specialist selected by Government should not be depended upon. If a request is made we will consider the request on its merits, but ordinarily we do not allow examination by outside doctors.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer (*c*)(*iii*) the Hon'ble Minister states, "I am not prepared to furnish this information in the public interest," that is, to disclose the name of the specialist. Will he kindly tell the House what are the qualifications of the specialist in question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the reason why the names of the doctors who examine a particular patient in the category of security prisoner are not published is that in some cases when the names did appear they were subjected to criticism in the public press, and for the protection of the doctors who examine these security prisoners we generally do not publish their names.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: My question is, will he be pleased to tell the House what are the qualifications of the specialists—not the names?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In each particular case we try to get a specialist, but what the qualifications are I cannot answer offhand. If I get notice I will furnish the information.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is considering the desirability of examining the ailing security prisoners by doctors of their choice where the doctors appointed by Government to examine them have differed in their opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know of any such case, but I will consider each case on its merits.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Brojendra Nath Das was declared to be a patient of suspected T.B. and accordingly he was sent to Suri for treatment and at Suri he was medically examined and was declared to be a patient of chronic bronchitis and not of T.B. and therefore he was retransferred to the Presidency Jail? May I request the Hon'ble Minister to see that Brojendra Nath Das can get himself examined by a doctor of his choice with the approval of Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the facts stated by the honourable member do not appear from the papers in my possession, but I shall be prepared to consider the suggestion which he has made.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that this Brojendra Nath Das, although declared not to have T.B , was detained for a very long time in Suri T.B. Hospital with other persons?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I want notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government is ready to have the patients treated in the Medical College Hospitals?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say offhand, but I will consider it.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether it is a fact that these prisoners in the Presidency Jail are not getting proper medicines and proper treatment?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Review of the cases of security prisoners by the Special Tribunal.

41. Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the cases of security prisoners that were examined by the Special (Justice Panckridge) Tribunal;

(*ii*) the number recommended for release; and

(*iii*) the number actually released?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of reviewing the cases of all security prisoners by a Special Tribunal consisting of one member each of the Bengal Assembly and the Bengal Council and one High Court Judge?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister also considering the desirability of informing each security prisoner in writing the charges on which he or she has been detained?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) In the public interest I am not prepared to give the information asked for.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Security prisoners are detained with a view to prevent them from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order or the efficient prosecution of the war. This fact is made clear in the detention order served on the security prisoner in each individual case.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state what he has done on the same question put a few days ago where he promised that he would give the answer so far as numbers were concerned and would not repeat the same argument that it could not be given in the public interest?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I remember the occasion when the question was put and I promised, but I regret, Sir, I have not been able to take up the matter. I am very sorry. I will give the information on Monday.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer (*c*) it is stated that the "security prisoners are detained with a view to prevent them from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order or the efficient prosecution of the war. This fact is made clear in the detention order served on the security prisoner in each individual case." Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether specific reasons were adduced in the detention order which led the Governmnt to think so?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I consider, Sir, that it is an expression of opinion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer "no" to the question (*b*) whether Government is considering the desirability of reviewing the cases of all security prisoners, etc., may I enquire if the answer is to the latter part of the question, namely, composition of the Tribunal, or to the former part, namely, the reviewing of the cases?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Review we are prepared to do, but not in the form suggested.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I enquire then in what form is the Government considering the desirability of reviewing the cases?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As soon as we get some time I promise to do it personally myself, and if I am satisfied that something wrong has been done or some leniency can be shown, orders will be issued to that effect.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Does not the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of appointing some eminent High Court Judge or retired High Court Judge or any outside authority to advise him in this matter, so that he, as he remains always in a busy atmosphere, may have time to get expert advice in this connection?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact persons of the status of High Court Judges have considered and reported on some cases.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir, not in this case. You are referring to the Panckridge Committee.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: All right, I will consider it.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*c*), namely, security prisoners are detained with a view to prevent them from acting, etc., will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there are any security prisoners who have been detained for the commitment of some specific acts?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer it offhand.

(Starred question No. 134A was called.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about unstarred question No. 42?

Mr. SPEAKER: That belongs to the Nawab Bahadur, and the question which is now being answered also belongs to the Nawab Bahadur, but it is a short-notice question and I understand that the Hon'ble Mr. Barman will be prepared to answer the question.

STARRED QUESTION

(to which oral answer was given)

Arrest of certain Bengalee Paddy Traders in Assam.

***134A** (SHORT NOTICE). **Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that some traders (*beparis*) from Bengal went to Assam to purchase paddy in the month of December, 1942; and

(*ii*) that while these traders were returning to Bengal with their boats loaded with paddy, the boats were seized at Dhubri, paddy taken away, the traders beaten and arrested?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking steps in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Yes, the boats were seized and the traders were arrested.

(*b*) A telegraphic enquiry about the details of the incident was addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, Dhubri, some time ago, and the Government of Assam have also been recently addressed in the matter.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have got any information from the Government of Assam with regard to the cases started against these merchants?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government sent a wire to the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, but no reply to the same has yet been received. Subsequently, a letter has been addressed to the Government of Assam.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: When was the wire sent?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: On the 19th February, 1943.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister explain why the action was taken on the 19th February when those arrests were made in December last and the fact of those arrests was communicated to Government? Why this delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: What I find from the file is that a telegram was received by this Government about the incident on 12th February, 1943, and they wired to the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, on the 19th February, 1943.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that a representation was made to the

Hon'ble Minister in charge of this department by an honourable member of this House about these arrests asking for redress of the grievances of merchants?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: When?

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Early January last.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have no such information.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that some 43,000 maunds of paddy have been attached and several thousand maunds of paddy have been confiscated by the Government of Assam?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: In Goalpara 57 cases have been registered; 95 boats with 16,327 maunds of paddy have been seized, and in Dhubri 211 boats with over 25,000 maunds of paddy have been seized.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, Government have taken after the telegraphic enquiry made on the 19th February, 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: A letter has already been issued to the Government of Assam and before that a telegram was sent to the Deputy Commissioner. Besides it is not within the power of this Government to do anything, because all the incidents happened in the territory of Assam.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the latest information with respect to the seizure of paddy that has been mentioned?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have already said that.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in view of the fact that Government is now informed that several thousands of maunds of paddy were seized by the Police of Assam, he considers the desirability of asking the Government of Assam to release the paddy seized from those merchants who have already paid for that paddy or asking them for money being the price of paddy seized by the Government of Assam, so that the Government of Bengal may compensate the loss of these really *bonâ fide* traders?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I cannot express any opinion on that. I ask for notice.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: No, no. I want to know whether this Government is considering the desirability of moving the Government of Assam.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: This Government will certainly do what is possible within their power.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government considers the desirability of ascertaining information about individual persons, I mean *beparis*, arrested and quantities of rice or paddy that have been seized or confiscated?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have already given that information.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: No, Sir. He has not answered this question.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, my question is whether Government is prepared to ascertain the individual cases of arrests and paddy or rice seized or forfeited?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: So far we have no information about it.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: I am not asking for information——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Your question is whether Government is considering the desirability of making enquiries relating to individual cases.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That can be done.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the persons that have been arrested are still under detention and the cases pending against them have been withdrawn?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I take it as a notice; I shall enquire into it.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether all the paddy that was seized and persons arrested have been released by this time?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered that.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) where it is stated that the boats were seized and the traders were arrested, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact, for Government have expressed themselves neither this way nor that way. I want to know specifically whether the allegation made in the question is a fact or it is not a fact? We find in the question that the traders were beaten.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As regards the allegation made, we have no information at present. I shall enquire into it.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government is considering the desirability of

enquiring whether these *beparis* were *bonâ fide* traders bringing rice from Assam to sell the same in Bengal, and, if so, if they are found to be *bonâ fide* traders will he be pleased to consider the desirability of moving the Assam Government to withdraw the cases against those *beparis*?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As I find, Sir, cases have already been started against those persons, it is for the court to say whether they are *bonâ fide* traders and whether they can be released or some other steps can be taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions over.

Point of Privilege.

Mr. SHAH SYED GOLAM SARWAR HOSAINI: On a point of privilege, Sir.

Sir, আমি Ministerialist Party পরিত্যাগ করে লীগ Partyতে যোগ দিতেছি।

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, are we entitled to know on this question of privilege whether the honourable member has been disappointed in his job-hunting?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. I am not concerned with any party question. It is open to any member to act as he likes outside this House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: When you have allowed this point of privilege——

Mr. SPEAKER: I have never allowed it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then, Sir, that portion should not be in the proceedings.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is Dr. Sanyal aware of the convention that a member is allowed to cross the floor of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

57—Miscellaneous.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 31,53,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the scheme for the control of vagrancy.

Sir, from a study of the budget we notice that a very large sum of money has been allotted in the current year and is proposed to be allotted in the coming year on this account, the sum respectively being Rs. 6,51,000 in the

revised budget of 1942-43 and Rs. 9,49,000 in the budget for 1943-44—the total amount involved being Rs. 16,00,000. When a big scheme like this is going to be adopted involving not merely a large capital expenditure but also committing the present Government to a very large amount of running expenses, the House is entitled to know the full details of the scheme. My motion is mainly directed to obtain full information from the Hon'ble Minister in charge about the whole scheme to deal with vagrancy in the province. Sir, I understand that for some years past the Calcutta Corporation and certain enthusiasts in the Calcutta city have been trying to devise ways and means to meet the beggar problem in the city. Thereafter certain conferences were held between the representatives of Government and the representatives of public bodies including the Corporation of Calcutta at which certain decisions were taken whereby the Government were prepared to undertake some amount of financial burden by way of subsidy or contribution to any scheme that the Calcutta Corporation might undertake. I am also aware that due to emergency conditions the finances and administrative limitations of the Corporation made it impossible for them to initiate the scheme themselves. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge what happened thereafter for which the Government thought it necessary to take over the liability for the entire amount on themselves, and if Government think that it is a scheme of such urgency that Government had to provide for this expenditure in an emergent year when many beneficent schemes have had to be abandoned.

So far as we can see, Sir, although the beggar problem in Calcutta is serious enough, the problem of beggars in the whole of the province is not only more serious but is likely to be far more serious in the coming months. I do not for a moment hope that by setting up one small Vagrants' Home in a district Government is going to solve the entire beggar problem of the province. Nor do I feel, Sir, that even the setting up of an institution accommodating or making provision for accommodation of 5,000 persons would enable the city of Calcutta to be completely free from the menace of diseased persons loitering about the city in search of alms and assistance from the generous public. We have not as yet had the full details discussed on the floor of this House in connection with the proposed Bengal Vagrancy Bill a notice for the introduction of which has already been given. But, Sir, a preliminary study of the Bill reveals that the Bill empowers certain machinery of Government to provide food, shelter and clothing for all vagrants, to provide medical treatment for the sick, work for the able-bodied and education for children as also for such adults as appear likely to benefit by it. If these four objectives are to be achieved, I feel, Sir, many persons would like to swarm the Vagrants' Home if food can be had, medical treatment can be obtained, able-bodied men get work and there is provision for education of children. But, Sir, where Government have failed to provide these essentials of living for the ordinary citizen, I cannot for a moment imagine how Government is going to provide them for the vagrants. Government must not put a premium on vagrancy. The result will be that we all will become vagrants and seek special privilege from the Government

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, I am myself ready to go with my whole family to the Vagrants' Home.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I really intend through my cut motion to obtain a full picture, and I feel, Sir, that the large sum that is involved, namely, 16 lakhs of rupees including the current year and the coming year's provisions, will be properly supplemented year after year with larger and larger amounts, and before we could undertake such a liability the House is entitled to know the entire scheme and the mind of the Government on this question. We also have got to know what staff the Government have employed in this connection, when they have got them, what salary they have proposed to pay, how they have been utilising their services so far and how they would utilise their services in future. This we want in order to be convinced that there is no top-heavy administration going to be set up and the amount of money that is going to be spent would not be wasted.

The other important point on which I would like to be satisfied, Sir, is whether any comprehensive legislative measure is thought of or the one of which notice has been given now. I am afraid, Sir, that in a country where there is no sickness insurance or unemployment insurance provided for the sick and the unemployed a mere empowering legislation to the Police to seize anybody whom the Police think to be a vagrant in the right sense of the term would not solve the problem. Simultaneously with such a legislation there should be other pieces of legislation of social insurance without which this scheme is bound to fail.

With these observations I move my motion and in case, Sir, there is complete satisfaction given by the Hon'ble Minister in charge, I would not press this motion to vote.

Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion about absence of donation for charitable purposes and contribution to the Association for the Prevention of Blindness in Bengal.

Sir, the association was created some 12 or 13 years ago. The idea was adopted from Egypt with the following main objects:—

(1) The study of blindness as regards its causation.

(2) The treatment of curable blindness.

(3) Preventive measures to limit blindness.

(4) To educate, interest and rouse the general public in the problem of blindness and its prevention.

(5) To enlist the sympathies of Government and public bodies.

The idea was that the work of alleviating or curing the blind and preaching the gospel of prevention would be carried out efficiently and economically by the travelling eye dispensary until there are sufficient number of ophthalmic surgeons and suitable hospitals throughout Bengal.

The association has five travelling dispensaries, one for each division in Bengal. Each dispensary has two medical officers and a compounder who carry out propaganda work for the prevention of blindness and care of the eyes by lectures, magic lantern slide demonstrations, cinemas, posters and pamphlets, etc. Systematic eye examination of school children and survey of blindness in the villages are also undertaken. In addition, they carry out routine curative work in public and private hospitals. Operative work is undertaken at most centres where the dispensary is visited and where indoor accommodation is available.

Each dispensary is run at a monthly cost of Rs. 400. A little more money would now be required for increase in prices of medicines, equipments and other materials.

The association has not yet been able to provide for house rent of the staff for want of sufficient funds. House problem is now a great problem for the staff that requires solution. They are now left at the mercy of the local bodies, such as district boards and municipalities and the generous public for housing. The staff is now carrying out its work under great disadvantage in the matter of their accommodation during tours.

Common causes of blindness in Bengal are apathy, ignorance and poverty. These enemies can be tackled by the awakening of the masses. Success of this task is dependent upon co-operation between Government and the people to bring into practice the resources of modern mass education by means of lectures, radio talks and cinema shows. The Association for Prevention of Blindness, Bengal, has been trying to co-ordinate the work and educate the lay public in the importance of the movement for prevention of blindness.

The association has grown into one of the popular and utility services in Bengal and has justified its existence by quantity and quality of services rendered to the province.

I have personal knowledge about the travelling dispensary that visited Naogoan town in 1938 and Rajshahi Sadar this year. The medical officers were so very popular and successful in their work that extension after extension of the period allowed for the dispensaries had to be sanctioned to meet the heavy demands and the huge rush of patients.

Everywhere services of the travelling eye dispensaries were appreciated by the high Government officials, local bodies and the general public. The work of the association was also appreciated by the Bengal Government and as practical proof of its appreciation the Government of Bengal sanctioned some grants occasionally to this association.

In the current budget Government has made no provision for the association. The reason is, I believe, that Government has no idea of the number of eye patients in the province and their demands for medical help.

In conclusion I request the Government to make some provision for donation to this association which is giving free medical aid to the eye patients of rural Bengal.

With these few words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. J. H. SPELLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion about the scheme for the removal of beggars from Calcutta.

Sir, my object is to criticise the lack of progress and not the scheme. On the 19th February, and as will be seen from starred question No. 44 of that date, I asked a question regarding the removal of beggars from Calcutta. Other members of the House raised supplementary questions on the same point. From the answers given I feel that the subject is one which should be pursued still further and this, in the interests of the citizens of Calcutta and others. The urgency of the problem, particularly in war conditions, cannot be stressed sufficiently.

Slit trenches and surface shelters are being used by the beggars, many of whom are diseased and full of infection, and it has been admitted by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Defence Co-ordination Department that many of the shelters are found to be in a dirty condition. The result of this is too apparent to need enlarging upon, for should there be an air raid, by no means a remote possibility, and these shelters are used, as it is hoped they will be, the danger from infection is very real. Then, too, the number of beggars suffering from infectious diseases, and now on the streets, seems to be on the increase. One need not look beyond the pavements on the south side of this building to realise the fact.

In reply to a question as to when Government proposed to introduce the necessary legislation for the collection and removal of the beggars in Calcutta I was informed "during the current session". But why has there been so much delay in introducing this legislation? Surely it was appreciated that time must elapse before legislation of the comprehensive type contemplated could be passed through both Houses—yet Government made no provision for this in the business of the session and it has only been belatedly introduced since the session commenced.

The House will be occupied with the demand for grants up to the end of March and we would like to know on what dates the consideration and passing of the Bill will be taken up? Further, we should like to know whether it is proposed that the Bill should be immediately considered and passed by the Council.

It seems to me, Sir, the scheme has been mismanaged for, surely, the necessary legislation for the removal of beggars from the streets should have come first, then the temporary arrangement for a camp and clearing station in the Calcutta area, while the permanent camp was being made available.

We appreciate Government's difficulties with regard to the selection of a site but point out that the existing site was selected nearly a year ago and certain staff engaged. In August, 1942, it was announced that detailed plans and estimates had been prepared, tenders had been called

for and obtained and contracts would be allotted in the course of a fortnight. In January, 1943, however, Government issued a communiqué which conflicts with this entirely. In this, the latter communiqué, it was stated that tenders were called for in September and contracts were allotted early in October. Why did Government issue a communiqué in August stating that tenders had been obtained and contracts were to be allotted in a fortnight when it is now apparent that tenders were not called for until September and contracts not allotted until October?

The problem was to get the beggars out of Calcutta and it should have been treated as an emergency problem and not have been held up until elaborate homes for the beggars were prepared. In any event Government by their own communiqués shew there was considerable delay in getting started with the work of constructing the Homes.

According to the reply against starred question 44(*c*) the Hon'ble Minister stated that a Controller and six Managers had been appointed, as also a few clerical and menial posts. Again according to answers (*d*)(*i*), (*ii*) and (*iii*), I find from a statement laid on the library table that, dating from May, 1942, and from time to time up to January, 1943, a Controller with car allowance, had been appointed, also six Managers, one Head Clerk, one typist and 3 clerks. All the staff, with the exception of two Managers who are watching the progress of construction are, to quote the reply (*d*)(*iii*) "formulating proposals for the multifarious matters which require to be determined preparatory to the inauguration of any such scheme." Up to the time of the reply having been given, I estimate the wages of the staff as being, with motor car allowance, approximately Rs. 22,000 and this before legislation has been passed. The Hon'ble Minister's reply (*d*)(*iii*) and in continuation of that which I have just quoted states that the staff are also engaged in arranging temporary accommodation in Calcutta for approximately 1,000 beggars pending completion of the Home at Mahalandi.

It is now, Sir, the middle of March, 1943; the Homes are, according to reply (*a*)(*ii*), to be ready by the end of May, 1943, some six weeks hence. Why was not the temporary accommodation arranged and used months ago? The beggars are still with us and a constant source of danger to the health and cleanliness of Calcutta.

I think I am right in saying that on being questioned at a meeting by a member of the Beggar Problem Special Committee, as to what further action the Government had taken, the Chief Executive Officer of this city stated that nothing practical had been done by Government although the Corporation had offered its emergency Labour Camp at Topsia for this purpose. If such is the case, why was this offer not accepted and why is a temporary site still being sought somewhere in the east of Calcutta—surely the accommodation provided as suitable for the labour staff of the Calcutta Corporation should be suitable for the beggars as a temporary measure. And again why is the search for temporary accommodation being continued when, and as already pointed out, only six weeks remain for the completion of the Homes at Mahalandi?

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to state that we view with the greatest concern the time wasted and the large sum of money spent before the Bill to remove the beggars had been placed before the House, so giving rise to criticism which one hears on all sides and which has been expressed on numerous occasions in the press.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about the distribution of relief money in the areas affected by communal riots in the district of Dacca. Sir, the House is aware and everyone outside the House is aware of the fact that communal riot of a very violent type took place in thanas Raipura and Narsingdi in the district of Dacca and this Government distributed relief there. Reliefs were of four kinds—gratuitous relief, agricultural loan, relief to artisan and relief for the construction of houses.

After the riot days the military and the police created such a havoc that the Muslim agriculturists had to leave these places and had to go away and had to live elsewhere. They were in great need of relief but in the distribution of relief, as we have learnt from questions and answers, Government appointed only Hindu officials and the money distributed in the form of relief went only to the Hindus. Not a single Muhammadan was benefited thereby and Government did not take any step to see that the Muslims who were affected got relief. So, I strongly protest and ask the Government to place all the facts before the House about the distribution of relief money.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, I feel called upon to make some observations on the motion that has been moved by my honourable friend Mr. Israil. Raipura thana is in my constituency and I know many of the instances that caused havoc to that unfortunate locality. Mr. Israil has tried to put a communal complexion on the relief measures adopted by the Government there. Sir, it may be in the memory of this House that several thanas in Narainganj subdivision, Raipura being one of them, experienced riots of a most devastating character and a committee of enquiry was formed by the Government of Bengal which went into the whole question and gave its verdict. The disturbances of the Dacca town were the precursor of the disturbances in the villages. In Dacca town both the Hindus and Muslims suffered—I do not say equally but they suffered in varying degrees—but in the villages the outstanding fact remains that the only community that suffered due to the riots is the Hindu community. (A VOICE FROM THE LEAGUE OPPOSITION: Question.) Well, I am prepared to meet any challenge that may be thrown in this respect. Hindu houses were burnt, Hindu property was looted. Hindu women folk was subjected to indescribable indignities. In the villages I was with the Judges, the members of the Committee, who made a tour of inspection there. In all the thanas only two Muslim houses were burnt and when these two cases of

arson were brought to the notice of the members of the Committee the Subdivisional Officer of Narayanganj, Mr. Saddler, who was present at the time, at once pointed out that these were not the doings of the Hindus. Mr. Saddler told the members of the Committee that those two houses that were alleged to have been burnt by Hindus were burnt by——. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: By the Hindus themselves.) No, by the Muslims themselves. Sir, I am quoting Mr. Saddler. He said: "No Sir; it is a case of mischief-making by Muslims." Even assuming that those two houses were burnt by Hindus, by no stretch of imagination can it be said that the Muslim community suffered materially in the few thanas. Therefore, Sir, it is extremely unfortunate if any member on the floor of the House flings this accusation on the face of Government that Government made any invidious distinction on communal grounds in the matter of distribution of relief. It may be, Sir, as Mr. Israil says, that the police and the military went there and in course of investigation and in course of rounding up of criminals they committed repression on the Muslims there. If they did that, I am extremely sorry for it. My honourable friend may remember the evidence that I gave before the Enquiry Committee in which I frankly said that if the soldiers committed any repression there on the Muslims they should be adequately dealt with. The outstanding fact remains, Sir, that the Muslims did not suffer in the village at all in the hands of the Hindus. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Hundreds of thousands of Muslims left the village along with their women folk.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Mahmood, you should not interrupt the honourable member in that way.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: If hundreds of thousands of Muslims fled away from the village, it was not due to any act on the part of the Hindus. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: In conspiracy with the police.) Nonsense. If they fled away, it must have been due to the military and the police who had been there. I do not vouch for the truth or otherwise as to whether the military or the police committed any repression——.

(Mr. Abdulla-Al Mahmood rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Mahmood, you have been in this House for nearly six years. There are speakers on your side who will be quite competent to reply to him. It is sheer disturbance to a certain extent if you go on quarrelling like that.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: On a point of order, Sir. The cut motion relates to the distribution of relief in the riot affected area in Dacca. It was Mr. Sen who raised the point that it was the Hindus who alone suffered. There was a question put by Mr. Ashutosh Lahiry to the effect, namely, what amount, if any, was granted by Government under the terms of a compromise to Hindu sufferers——.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. There is a tendency in the country as well as in the House to give the appearance of communalism in every thing. That is a most regrettable state of things. I hope that

in future communalism and communal talks will be avoided as far as practicable and they should be introduced only when it is absolutely necessary to clear up any points; otherwise not. In this particular matter also my attention was not drawn to it before. I say that this motion does not really introduce any communal affair at all. The motion is for distribution of relief in the areas affected by communal riots in the district of Dacca. It is an undoubted fact that there were communal riots in Dacca. The question relates to distribution of relief. There might have been Hindus affected, there might have been Muslims affected. The question strictly speaking is with regard to distribution of relief. I hope that communalism will not be brought in any further on this point.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Then a talk on Scheduled Castes will also be a communal matter! (Laughter.)

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: To sum up, Sir, if the people suffered —be they Hindus or Muhammadans—they must get relief. There is no question about that. But, Sir, I submit that it is not correct to say that the Muslims suffered in the villages, that they were rendered homeless or their properties were burnt or looted. So it is unfair to say to the Government that they did not give relief to the riot-affected Muslims in the villages.

(Mr. Shah Syed Golam Sarwar Hosaini rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hosaini, you will have an opportunity to speak later.

Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Israil has thought it fit to reopen this painful episode of our recent past. Sir, it is well known that in the village area in Narainganj subdivision the Hindus alone suffered. On the question of distribution of relief, it is a painful story which is not known to the wider public. Government sanctioned about Rs. 1,36,000 by way of gratuitous relief for the Hindus affected by riots in the Narainganj subdivision, but you will be surprised to learn, Sir, that out of this money about Rs. 1 lakh remained unspent up to 1st April, 1942. Why? Because the relief work was in charge of a Muslim officer named Abdus Sattar, Circle Officer of Raipura, who had his headquarters at Narshingdi. When the Hindus ran to him for help, he scared them away and reported that the Hindus did not require any help at all. In this way, Sir, several months passed and when we got the information we brought the matter to the notice of the District Magistrate, but it was already middle of March then and the grant was about to lapse. Actually, the grant did lapse. In April it was continued and restored. The Muslims had no grievance in the matter. It was the Hindus who did not get any relief. From the figures supplied by the Chief Minister himself yesterday, it appears that before April, 1942, only Rs. 36,000 had been spent for gratuitous relief to the Hindus. I must say, Sir, that that is a scandalous state of things. That was solely due to the criminal neglect of duty of the Circle Officer who was entrusted with the responsibility. Having said so much, Sir, I do not like to pursue this question any further.

There is another point on which I would like to speak, *i.e.*, about the Vagrants' Home. Certain arrangements have been made for setting up a Vagrants' Home in Mahalandi. The Public Service Commission recommended one particular gentleman, I mean Babu Karunamay Mukherji, and gave him the first preference. But the Hon'ble Minister thought it fit to override his claim. He appointed another man, namely, Mr. Nihar Gupta who was much less experienced. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister how is it that a man who was given the first preference by the Public Service Commission and who indisputably was more experienced and more conversant with this kind of work had his claim superseded and a comparatively less qualified man of the department was appointed to that post. I hope that the Hon'ble Minister will throw light on this question.

Mr. SHAH SYED GHOLAM SARWAR HOSSAINI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, যাঁরা এখানে বক্তৃতা করেছেন তাঁদের অধিকাংশের বাড়ী ঢাকায়। আমি ঢাকার বাহিরের লোক। গত ঢাকার দাঙ্গার সময় আমি নিরপেক্ষ সংবাদ এবং নিরপেক্ষ মত সংগ্রহ করতে চেষ্টা করেছি। মৌলভী মহম্মদ ইস্‌রাইল সাহেব ঢাকা দাঙ্গার ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ব্যক্তিদের প্রতি গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে সাহায্য করেছেন সেই সাহায্য সম্পর্কে যে সম্পূর্ণ নিরপেক্ষভাব রক্ষিত হয় নি সেই বিষয়ে আলোচনা করার জন্য এই পরিষদে cut motion উপস্থিত ক'রেছেন। আমি মৌলভী মহম্মদ ইস্‌রাইল সাহেবের motion সমর্থন করি এবং সমর্থনের পক্ষে দুটী কথা বলতে চাই। স্যার, ঢাকা দাঙ্গা সম্পর্কে McNair Enquiry Committeeর সাক্ষ্য যিনি মনোযোগের সহিত পড়েছেন তিনি নিশ্চয়ই স্বীকার করবেন যে ইংরাজ রাজত্বের আমলে পূর্ব্ব বাংলার মুসলমানদের উপর একরম অত্যাচার কোথাও হয়নি। হিন্দু পুলিশ হিন্দু পাব্‌লিক্—

Mr. YOUSUF MIRZA: On a point of order, Sir. This point was raised just now in the case of Mr. Sen. I hope you will ask him to confine himself to the cut motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: If he transgresses the limit, I will certainly pull him up.

Mr. SHAH SYED GHOLAM SARWAR HOSSAINI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, আপনার যোগে আমি অন্যান্য পার্টির মেম্বরদের জানিয়ে দিতে চাই যে ইতিপূর্ব্বে বক্তা যে কথা বলেছিলেন আমি ঠিক সেকথা বলতে পারি না, তিনি ত সম্পূর্ণভাবে তাঁর কথা বলেছেন। স্যার। ঢাকা রিলিফের ব্যাপারে মুসলমানেরা যথেষ্ট ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছে। আমি ঢাকার বাহিরের লোক, কিন্তু আমি জানি বোলে একটা দৃষ্টান্ত এই পরিষদে উপস্থিত করতে চাই এবং তা অত্যন্ত সত্য। যাঁরা সত্যই নিরপেক্ষ তারা হিন্দু হউন, মুসলমান হউন, খৃষ্টান হউন তাঁরা নিশ্চয়ই এ বিষয়ে আমার সঙ্গে একমত হবেন। আমার মনে আছে সেই riotএর সময় যখন ভূতপূর্ব্ব গভর্ণমেণ্ট পার্টির মিটিং হচ্চে এখানে সেই সময় ঢাকায় ৫ জন মুসলমান একখণ্ড কোরআন শরীফ নিয়ে উপস্থিত হন এবং আমার সঙ্গে দেখা হওয়ায় বলেন যে তাঁরা জনাব ফজলুল হক সাহেবের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে চান এবং আমাকে সে বিষয়ে একটু সুবিধা কোরে দিতে বলেন। তাঁহারা বলেন আমরা এই রক্তাক্ত কোরআন শরীফ দেখাতে এসেছি। তারপরে আমি পার্টির ২।১ জন মেম্বরকে ডেকে উপস্থিত কোরে বললাম—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. It is painful to hear these stories narrated. These stories have perhaps been repeated many times in many

places. Here we are concerned with the distribution of relief money in the areas affected by communal riots in the district of Dacca. So confine your remarks to the distribution of relief money so far as this cut motion is conderned, and I hope you will not try to introduce irrelevant matters.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: On a point of order, Sir. From the speech of Mr. Sen it appears that they deny that Muslims suffered any loss or any compensation is necessary for Muslims. So unless it is substantiated by instances that Muslims also, as Hindus, suffered loss, the question of their relief does not come in. So to substantiate that Mr. Sarwar has been citing instances.

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite appreciate that in view of the speech made by Mr. Sen it requires some statement from the other side to the effect that Muslims also suffered, but details are not necessary. So I would request Mr. Sarwar to limit himself to that statement of facts simply. As Mr. Sen has stated that it was the Hindus who were the worst sufferers, Mr. Sarwar can as well say—No, that is not a fact: Muslims also suffered. I would request Mr. Sarwar not to introduce details for which time also is very short.

Mr. SHAH SYED GHOLAM SARWAR HOSSAINI : আমি বল্‌তে চাই যে সেই সমস্ত মুসলমানেরা ভীষণ ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছিলেন এবং সেখানে মুসলমানেরা কোন রিলিফ পায় নি। সেই জিনিসটাই আমি বোঝাতে চাই। একজন মুসলমান কোর্‌আন পড়্‌চে। সেখানে একজন হিন্দু পুলিশ এবং হিন্দু পাব্‌লিক তাকে হত্যা করে, তার রক্ত কোরআন শরীফে লেগে গেছে। সেই সমস্ত ব্যাপারে গভর্ণমেণ্ট থেকে কোন রকম ক্ষতিপূরণ দেওয়া হয় নি। হিন্দুরা দলে দলে শত শত মসজেদ চূর্ণ কোরেছে, তারও কোন ক্ষতিপূরণ দেওয়া হয় নি। ঢাকার হাজার হাজার মুসলমানকে জেলে দিয়েছে, হাজতে দিয়েছে, তারা কৃষিকার্য্য কর্‌তে পারে নি, জমি বেআবাদ রয়ে গেছে; সে সমস্ত ক্ষতিপূরণ মুসলমানদের করা হয় নি। তা ছাড়া মুসলমানের মাদ্রাসা নষ্ট করেছে, তারও ক্ষতিপূরণ করা হয় নি। মুসলমানের বাড়ীঘর, দরজা আগুন দিয়ে পুড়িয়ে দিয়েছে, ভেঙে দিয়েছে, তারও ক্ষতিপূরণ দেওয়া হয় নি; অলঙ্কার তৈজসপত্র হিন্দু পুলিশ ও হিন্দু পাব্‌লিক লুটপাট কোরেছে, তার ক্ষতিপূরণ দেওয়া হয় নি। হিন্দুদের সম্যক্‌ভাবে দেওয়া হয়েছে, মুসলমানদের মোটেই দেওয়া হয় নি। আর সেই ক্ষতিপূরণ হিন্দু অফিসার দ্বারাই বিতরণ করা হয়েছে। ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হিন্দু দোকানদার সাহায্য পেয়েছে কিন্তু তার পাশের মুসলমান দোকানদার যে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছে তার কথা গভর্ণমেণ্ট মোটেই মনে করেন নি। এই বিতরণ সম্বন্ধে তদন্ত করলে বোঝা যায় যে বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিসভার আমলে মুসলমানদের উপরে যথেষ্ট অবিচার হয়েছে।

এই কয়টী কথা বোলে আমি মৌলভী মহম্মদ ইস্‌রাইল সাহেবের cut motion সমর্থন কর্‌চি।

Mr. SYED AHMED KHAN : মাননীয় স্পীকার সাহেব—আমি একথা বলতে চাই যে আমার বন্ধু সরওয়ার সাহেব বলেছেন Dacca riot সম্বন্ধে যে সেখানে মুসলমানদের উপর অত্যাচার হয়েছে, জুলুম হয়েছে, তাদের যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে relief দেওয়া হয় নাই ইত্যাদি। আমি বলতে চাই যে ঐ ঘটনাগুলি সেই সময়কার Minister স্যার নাজিমুদ্দিন সাহেবের আমলে ঘটে। আজ সরওয়ার এই যে কথাগুলি বলেছেন তার কারণ তিনি যখন যেদিকে সুবিধা

বোঝেন সেই দিকেই চলেন। একবার এদিক একবার সেদিক যাওয়ার অভ্যাস তাঁর বরাবরই আছে। আজ তাই তিনি উত্তেজিত হয়ে মুসলমানদের উপর অত্যাচার অবিচারের কথা বলছেন।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The Hon'ble Mr. Basu.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, two cut motions have been placed before the House in connection with the removal of beggars from Calcutta. My honourable friend Dr. Sanyal has raised the question and has indicated in his speech the various points that he wanted this House to consider in connection with his cut motion. He has raised the question of the genesis of the scheme for the removal of beggars from Calcutta.

Sir, if time permits I shall give a very short résumé of the history of this movement and also try to meet the points that he has raised. Serious notice of the Calcutta beggar nuisance was first taken in 1920, when the Pickford Mendicant Enquiry Committee was appointed, but its recommendations were not accepted because they were found to be too costly. In 1934 the Calcutta Rotary Club took up this question and called a conference on the 6th February, 1934, at which Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, the then Mayor of Calcutta, presided. The Confrence appointed a committee to prepare a workable scheme and on the 24th July, 1935, the Corporation of Calcutta passed a resolution urging the Government to pass a suitable Vagrancy Bill. In the meantime the Calcutta Rotary Club, to whose efforts I must take this opportunity of paying a tribute in this respect, with the co-operation of the Salvation Army, the Refuge and other bodies formulated a scheme together with a draft Vagrancy Bill and published their proposals with an introduction from Sir John Anderson, the then Governor of Bengal, who took a personal interest in the solution of this problem. Government forwarded the scheme to the Corporation in February 1936 inviting their opinion. The Corporation appointed a sub-committee and on the 23rd August, 1938, they considered the committee's report which recommended that the Government be requested to pass necessary legislation on the lines of the Vagrancy Bill drafted by the Rotary Club. It also recommended a capital grant amounting to Rs. 40,000 and an annual recurring grant of Rs. 24,000, to the Refuge to enable that organisation to provide accommodation for 750 beggars not suffering from leprosy or tuberculosis. The Corporation generally approved of the scheme proposed in the draft Vagrancy Bill, but postponed consideration of the financial proposals until the Bill was passed into law. The scheme was still in a state of suspended animation when the outbreak of the Japanese war and the invasion of Burma brought it to life again amongst the citizens of Calcutta at the prospect of their sharing the air-raid shelters with the diseased beggars. A public meeting held on the 22nd January 1942 elected a small committee to frame a scheme to be put into operation as soon as possible. I would rather modify the expression "public meeting," for it was a conference called at the instance of Government shortly after the present Ministry came into office. This committee decided that no existing buildings or charitable organisations could accommodate beggars and that

homes must be built for this purpose. Thereafter followed a long search for suitable buildings in or near about Calcutta. Some suitable garden houses which were selected in the outskirts of Calcutta were commandeered or requisitioned for military purposes one after the other. In this connection I beg this House to remember that accommodation of a large number of beggars, many of whom are diseased, infirm or highly infectious, cannot be secured except in large houses situated somewhere away from human habitation and having necessary facilities for sanitary purposes and such other purposes with suitable arrangements for providing means in order to keep them secure within the premises. These were the essential requirements for a suitable habitation for beggars near a large city. Our search for suitable buildings with which an immediate start could have been made with the scheme was doomed to failure because of the compelling necessity for military purposes of large houses near Calcutta which was experienced at that time.

After choosing and planning of sites as many as four times we found the sites requisitioned one after the other by the military authorities. I remember that a large site somewhere in the district of the 24-Parganas and two sites in the district of Midnapore had to be abandoned in this fashion. I myself visited one place in Midnapore for a site, and the very moment I was there inspecting the proposed site the military authorities came and inspected the site also. Before I left the place it was intimated to me that the site would not be available for beggars as the military authorities wanted it. Now Government selected a site at last at Mahalandi in Murshidabad, and plans and estimates were approved in July, 1942, and contracts were given in September. Here I must refer to a very pertinent question raised by Mr. Speller pointing out an apparent discrepancy in the two communiqués, one issued some time in August, 1942, and another in January, 1943. Now the discrepancy is more apparent than real. The August communiqué is correct regarding calling of tenders. Tenders had been obtained and were under scrutiny when that communiqué was issued. There might have been some cause of delay, but the contracts were allotted as soon as possible and they were probably allotted in September. Probably at the time the January communiqué was drafted these dates were temporarily forgotten as they were not very material for the purpose of the January communiqué and there is a certain lapse of memory as to the exact dates to which attention has justly been drawn by Mr. Speller.

Now so far as the introduction of the Bill is concerned it will be realised by the House that until arrangements are made for the accommodation of the beggars, the seizure of beggars would be of no avail. It was considered at the time these contracts were let out that these homes at Mahalandi would be ready by the time we expected them to be ready, some time towards the middle of this year. But unfortunately the difficulty of securing building materials proved enormous. In fact, the difficulties of acquiring bricks was so enormous that we had decided to let out contracts for the purpose of starting brick fields and brick kilns near the site so that we could have our own ready-made bricks with which to start these homes.

But the problem of coal proved insurmountable. The bricks which were there were to be utilised for the purpose of building the compound wall after the construction of which we could have erected temporary sheds, not *pucca*, but *kutcha*, and could have made a start in these sheds. The compound wall was essentially necessary for keeping the beggars under more or less restrained conditions. The compound wall required several lakhs of bricks near the site and the work was about to be started when these bricks were commandeered for military purposes. But the difficulty as regards coal once again stood in our way. I am glad now to intimate to the House that all these difficulties have been surmounted one after another and work is being pushed on very vigorously. We expect to move on with the construction, part of which has already been taken in hand, at the earliest possible date. In the meantime, the question of removal of diseased beggars became very important and insistent, and for that purpose decision was taken that a selection should be of about 1,000 beggars and they should be accommodated in Calcutta in a building situated in the eastern outskirts of the city. The question has been raised by my honourable friend, Mr. Speller, why was no attempt made to take advantage of the offer made by the Corporation of Calcutta who offered to place at the disposal of the Government for this purpose their labour camp in Topsia. The answer is very simple. The Corporation was asked to surrender two labour camps which could accommodate the necessary number of 1,000 beggars who, we estimated, were required to be removed at once in order that disease and infection might not spread into the shelters. But unfortunately the Corporation offered only one which had never been occupied by their own labour because of the difficulty of water-supply and sanitation and this labour camp was designed to accommodate only 220 beggars—much less than what we really wanted to accommodate, viz., 1,000. It is for this reason that this offer of the Corporation could not be accepted, because it would have served no useful purpose even in the solution of the very bare minimum of the problem which we wanted to solve.

Then, Sir, on the question of the Vagrancy Bill. I admit that this Bill has been somewhat late in coming. The reason for that was that our intention originally was to introduce an Ordinance before the present session came to be held in order that a move on might be made with the execution of the scheme even before the session. Unfortunately the two questions are correlated—the question of legislation and the question of accommodation. While we were on the lookout for accommodation in Calcutta of a temporary nature for which we requested the Commissioner of Police to help us as well as the Corporation authorities, and we were making investigation for the purpose of securing a suitable site, legislation had necessarily to be postponed. The Ordinance was ready in draft to be promulgated, but unfortunately the delay in securing a suitable site in Calcutta stood in the way of an early promulgation of the Ordinance. Thereafter came the session of the House and no Ordinance would be competent when the House is sitting. The result is that we have introduced

this Bill, and we are taking the earliest possible opportunity of bringing it up before the House. I can assure the House that every attempt will be made to take the opportunity which has presented itself by the sitting of this House, to get this measure through both Houses of Legislature during this session. If we fail to take this opportunity, we shall have to fall back on the method of Ordinance immediately after the House goes out of session without this Bill being passed. Now, that is the position with regard to all these matters which have been agitating the different sections of the House.

Dr. Sanyal has raised some questions throwing doubt upon the necessity of the scheme in preference to many other schemes of a beneficent nature. The reply has very rightly been offered by Mr. Speller. Mr. Speller has made out a strong case as to why this scheme should be taken immediately in hand, and he has lightened my task by his informative speech as to the necessity of this measure which would go to answer many of the points which have been raised by my friend Dr. Sanyal. At the same time, I think it is up to me to place certain facts in answer to queries put by Dr. Sanyal. I might inform him that the homes at Mahalandi had been planned to accommodate 5,000 beggars. The capital cost of Mahalandi homes is about 11 lakhs. The recurring cost in normal times is expected to be between 6 and 7 lakhs when the homes are full. The main item of expenditure is food for the beggars which, reckoned at 4 annas per head per day, comes approximately to a lakh of rupees a year per thousand beggars. I do not think that it would be legitimate to say that in preference to many other beneficent schemes in the Medical and Public Health Department this scheme has been taken. When the time comes for the discussion of the Medical Budget and the Public Health Budget, I shall place whatever I have got to state before this House in connection with those schemes, what headway has been made, and how far we have failed in carrying into effect some of the schemes which we had prepared in those departments, failed because of the urgency and insistence of the demands relating to the war. But I can assure Dr. Sanyal and the House that this scheme was of such overwhelming necessity that it could not wait any longer. The way in which some of the public shelters—parabolic aboveground shelters as well as some of the private buildings which have been placed at the disposal of Government by generous members of the public—have been used by diseased and infirm beggars rendered the provision that we are making so insistent and urgent that this scheme could not be put back any further than what has already been done on account of reasons over which we had very little control.

Now, Sir, I suppose that within the short time at my disposal I have been able to answer some of the salient questions that have been raised in Mr. Speller's speech, and if any of them remain outstanding I shall be very glad to deal with them if Mr. Speller gives me an opportunity after this meeting.

There is one question which has been raised by my esteemed friend Mr. Ashutosh Lahiry with regard to the appointment of a Manager. I am

afraid that my friend has been entirely misinformed when he says that the first preference of the Public Service Commission was not accepted in the matter of these appointments. I know that the question of one of the applicants was raised in some newspapers and Government brought out a press note correcting the error. The fact of the matter is that in the appointment of these Managers, the first nominee of the Public Service Commission has been appointed; the second nominee has also been appointed; the third nominee has not been appointed, but the fourth has been appointed. The third nominee has not been appointed because he was a mere journalist and an insurance agent, but the fourth was a Deputy Jailor in a Bengal jail and a second class M.A. in Economics of the Calcutta University. As these beggars' homes will be run on lines similar to a certain extent to those followed in jails this jailor was considered to be a much better candidate than the third nominee who was a journalist and an insurance agent. As regards the three Muslim nominees, the first has been accepted; the second also has been accepted; the third could not join as he was serving under the Government of India, and another Muslim nominee has been accepted in his place. That is the position, and under the circumstances I do not think that the criticism is justified. I am glad that these questions have been raised in this House because after strenuous attempts extending over two decades the public of Calcutta have at last been assured that this important problem is going to be solved. And if this House has the satisfaction of passing into law a Bill which will solve this outstanding problem of Calcutta I hope it will have done a good piece of work in the discharge of its duties. Humanitarian work which is being undertaken in feeding the hungry and in succouring the diseased will, I hope, be accepted in the spirit in which it is offered by those who have got the interest of this city at heart.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Sir, on a point of information. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister through you if it is still expected that the homes at Mahalandi will be completed by the end of May?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I am afraid that it will not be possible to complete the homes within May, 1943, because we are still grappling with the difficulties with regard to building materials. In the meantime, the beggar's homes which are being fitted up near Calcutta will continue to accommodate 1,000 beggars and the need will to a certain extent be satisfied while we are pushing through our Mahalandi scheme with the greatest possible speed.

There is another matter, Sir, which was raised by a cut motion moved by Maulvi Maniruddin Akhand. I am thankful to him for raising a very important question by his cut motion, namely, the question of grant to the Association for the Prevention of Blindness in Bengal. It is an important matter and the Government, I can assure my friend, has increased the grant this year from what it granted last year. Government is well aware that the work that is being done by this Association is of such vital importance that it may result in the solution of the problem of blindness in the countryside and so this cut motion is extremely welcome to us.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Mr. J. H. SPELLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister for the Department of Local Self-Government may I have your permission to withdraw my motion?

The motion of Mr. J. H. Speller that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Maulvi Maniruddin Akhand that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 31,53,000 for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq that a sum of Rs. 31,53,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "57—Miscellaneous" was then put and agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the next matter is taken up I should like to tell the House that I propose to adjourn the House punctually at 1 p.m. There is three-quarters of an hour's time at our disposal now. I think it will be better if we allot 15 minutes to "Famine" and half an hour to "Miscellaneous Departments." I would request the honourable members moving the amendments to keep themselves strictly within the limit of time allotted to them. I would allow three minutes to each of them.

54—Famine.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 13,05,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "54—Famine".

Maulvi HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 13,05,000 for expenditure under the head "54—Famine" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion about providing more money for famine relief and gratuitous relief.

Sir, no amount of criticism however helpful or constructive will respond to the indifferent and callous mind of this Ministry which is always anxious for self-existence. We know, Sir, that a Ministry supported by so many heterogeneous elements and groups cannot utilise the best of its time which it is entrusted for. The whole attention of the Hon'ble Chief Minister as well as his colleagues has been focussed in maintaining peace and order in the party. Assembly session is such a botheration. Free when they are, they are sandwitched and to the top of it is the League phobia. Naturally, Sir, the cry of hungry millions of Bengal will never reach their ears.

Sir, since the commencement of this session we have discussed woefu tales of scarcity, distress, cyclone, starvation and abnormal rise in price of everyday necessaries of life at different parts of the province. The whole of Bengal is in famine condition—famine in food, famine in salt, kerosene, coal and cloth and so on.

Sir, in a note circulated to the members of this House by the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan who is also a member of this House we find that there is a deficit of rice more or less in all the districts of Bengal. Even the districts which are called self-sufficient or surplus in respect of food have to look to outside for help this year. Rajshahi Division which is reported to be a surplus one, has an average yield of about 47 per cent. of the normal year's and the result is that the production is far below its own requirements. But in spite of this, paddy and rice are being exported in large quantities outside the division with so-called permits from the Director of Civil Supplies. This action on the part of the Government certainly means starvation of the people who never felt it before. Sir, due to draught and late rains paddy crops have failed in some of the thanas of Dinajpur district of which (at this stage the member reached his time-limit but was allowed to speak for one minute more) Khansama, Haripur, Baliadangi, Rani Sankail, Thakurgaon, Atoari in Thakurgaon subdivision are badly affected. We have already started test relief work in a small scale in Khansama thana and also in Balurghat out of District Board fund. The trouble of the people has been accelerated by the issue of certificates for realising dues such as Government cess and dues under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. May I humbly request the Government to be a little wise in not issuing certificates at this critical time? Sir, if we look into the figures of other districts, we find similar difficulties. Burma used to supply us about 4 crores of maunds of rice in normal years. But the supply has been stopped due to Burma being in the possession of Japan——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid, your time is up.

(The member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Khan, I think you will not be moving your motion. You will only speak.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes, Sir.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Sir, I beg to move that the sum of Rs. 13,05,000 for expenditure under the head "54—Famine" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion about Government's unsympathetic attitude in the matters of relief and inordinate delay in and inadequacy of relief measures in the cyclone-affected areas of 24-Parganas and Midnapore.

Sir, the time allotted to me is very short and it is very difficult to finish the whole Mahabharat in a few minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are a Brahmin and you can very well do that! (Laughter.)

Mr. P. BANERJI: Sir, it may be recalled that after the cyclone of the 16th October, we visited that area towards the middle of November. On receipt of the information that the Diamond Harbour Relief Committee which was formed immediately after the occurrence was very much handicapped on account of the restrictions imposed by the then Subdivisional Officer Mr. Woodford. I saw him on the 15th November. The Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu also visited that area the same afternoon. What we noticed there was that Government up to that date only sanctioned Rs. 3,000 and only 300 maunds of rice was sent to different areas starting from Sunderbans right up to Kakdwip and Kulpi.

Now, in those areas up to the 15th November nothing much was done. When non-official relief organisations like the Janaseba Sangha and the Marwari Relief Society asked for permission to distribute food-stuffs and other necessaries of life, they were not allowed to do so. The funniest part of the whole thing was that the Subdivisional Officer asked these organisations to deposit their food-stuffs and other articles with Government to be distributed through the agency of the Subdivisional Officer, that is Government officials.

Now, Sir, when I went there and asked him why this was done, he could not give any satisfactory answer, but at the same time he insisted upon distribution being made through the Government officials. When I explained to him that relief had always been organised satisfactorily by the philanthropic non-official organisations and not by Government, he at last allowed the boats of the non-official organisations to enter the area and distribute relief although he was not satisfied with this arrangement. But he had to allow this.

Now, after the 16th October, Diamond Harbour Relief Committee engaged certain boats for carrying in the cyclone-affected area good drinking water from Diamond Harbour. They asked for permission which was only for a week or a fortnight. This method of permission was a great handicap. Sometimes rice and water remained in boats waiting for permission. The permission was not given in time and the Subdivisional Officer arrested some boatmen and fined them on the plea that they had entered that denial area without previous permission. This will explain how unsympathetic the Government officials were even in matters of relief.

Sir, as there is no time, I will briefly refer to another matter for the information of the House and the Hon'ble Minister. What was the quantity of rice that was distributed from Kakdwip? We were told that half a seer per head per day should be distributed. They first started with half a seer, but after some time it was reduced to a quarter of a seer per day and afterwards it was reduced to once a week. People came for relief from a distance of 8 or 9 miles and returned disappointed.

Sir, in this connection, I may refer to a sad incident. One Muhammadan lad about 13 or 14 years old came to take dole in the Kakdwip centre and he was in such a plight that immediately after receiving the dole, he fell down unconscious, was removed to the hospital, where he died.

Sir, this is the state of affairs in that area. Government officials are very unsympathetic and even now test relief that is being given is not sufficient and we are told that even this is going to be withdrawn. Although about six months have already passed, no arrangement for the supply of cattle has been made; nothing much has been done in different directions to alleviate the sufferings of the people. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to make an enquiry into the matter and see that better arrangements are made in this area. Of course, in Midnapore and other places where there have been cases of sabotage, Government may adopt retaliatory measures. That is a quite different matter. Why this indifferent attitude should be taken up there when people are absolutely non-violent?

Sir, Government themselves are doing nothing in these areas. On the other hand, the Secretary and other members of Diamond Harbour Non-Official Relief Committee who are doing excellent relief works are being arrested and sent to prison and thereby the non-official organisations are being handicapped from all directions. This in short is the sort of relief being given by the local officers and it is up to the Hon'ble Minister to take up this matter and see that up to the end of the year 1947 poor agriculturists are kept alive, by all means.

Sir, with these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the provision for gratuitous relief in the next year's budget. In the revised budget, the provision was for Rs. 42 lakhs, but in the next year's budget the provision is for less than Rs. 6 lakhs. I think Government have shown a lamentable lack of foresight in making this provision. They say that the increased provision in the revised budget was on account of the fact that there was acute distress in Midnapore and 24-Parganas on account of the recent cyclone. They have overlooked the fact that there will be unprecedented distress not only in one or two districts but almost in the whole of Bengal in the coming year. Rice is now selling on an average at Rs. 20 per maund almost throughout Bengal, and on account of the short-sighted policy that Government have recently announced, namely, partial de-control, I think the price will rise up very soon to a far higher level. As an effect of that, people will starve and many are bound to die. What is the composition of the people of this province? If that is examined, it will be seen that the vast majority are agriculturists—at least four crores of the total population are agriculturists and of these agriculturists about two crores are landless labourers. What will be their condition? The only wealthy people are merchants—they are quite well off now—the big landlords, industrilists and also men in the higher ranks of the various services, both Government and private. Save and except these people, all others—lawyers, clerks and small service-holders—are in distress. The relief that is being given to clerks and small service-holders is already proving insufficient. In a few days they also will be in very great difficulty in making both ends meet. But so far as landless labourers are concerned, their position will be absolutely impossible within a very

short time. Therefore, I think that it will not be a matter of Rs. 6 lakhs, but at least Rs. 5 crores will be necessary if Government have any intention to keep the people alive during the distress that is imminent; in that place they have provided only Rs. 6 lakhs for gratuitous relief. They may say that there is a great flow of money in the country. I admit that on account of the war, on account of the increased industrial activities and on account of war supplies, there is a great flow of wealth in the country. There is no doubt about that, but there is a great maldistribution of that money and the maldistribution of money will result in the maldistribution of the limited food-stuffs that are available. How will the poor people be able to purchase food-grains for their consumption? It will not be possible for them to do so as they will have no money.

Sir, I submit that as there is a small shortage of food-stuffs, the situation could certainly have been saved. The shortage is about, say, 15 to 25 per cent. That is the estimate. If that is so, the only possible way to save the people was to introduce a well-considered system of rationing. Rationing would have distributed the distress evenly amongst the total population, but in the absence of that, the distress will be confined to the poor. The wealthy people, whatever may be the price of rice, will be able to purchase it. But the poor will have no money to purchase. In the absence of a rationing scheme, the only way in which Government can save the people will be by giving them agricultural loans and by giving them gratuitous relief to a very great extent. I think about Rs. 5 crores will be necessary for that.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHAWMIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, আমি Midnaporeএ gratuitous relief, test relief এবং agricultural loan দান সম্বন্ধে দুএকটি কথা বোলে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করতে চাই। পটাশপুরথানা ৭নং unionএ gratuitous relief, test relief এবং agricultural loan একেবারেই দেওয়া হয় নাই। হরিদাসপুরে প্রায় হাজার লোকের বাস। তারমধ্যে মাত্র দশটি লোককে gratuitous relief দেওয়া হয়েছে, তাও মাত্র একবার এবং reliefএর পরিমাণ দেড় টাকা, দুই টাকা, আড়াই টাকা মাত্র। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে একশটি unionএ relief দেবার ভার নিয়েছিলেন তার মধ্যে অনেক যায়গায় relief একেবারেই দেওয়া হয় নাই। আবার কোন কোন যায়গায় relief একবার মাত্র দিয়েই বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে। এখনও বহু unionএ gratuitous relief এবং agricultural loanএর প্রয়োজন আছে। তারপর test relief ব্যাপারেও যে ভাবে ব্যয় চলছে আমি সে সম্বন্ধেও মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি। অধিকাংশ যায়গায় কোন কাজ হচ্ছে না। ধারোতা (?) নামক যায়গায় স্থির করা হয়েছে যে হাজার টাকা খরচ করে একুশ বিঘা পরিমাণ একটি দীঘি খনন করা হবে। দেখে মনে হয় বাঃ! কিন্তু আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে বলছি যে এক যায়গায় একুশ বিঘা দীঘি খনন না করে একুশটি থানায় এক এক বিঘার এক একটি দীঘি খনন করলে দেশের লোকের অনেক বেশী উপকার হত। আমি এখানে আর একটি অপ্রীতিকর বিষয়ের প্রতি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি। তমলুকে S. D. O. সাহেব হিন্দুদের উপর অবিচার করছেন। সেখানে যে embankment বাঁধা হচ্ছে তার ভেতর বার মাইলের কাজ মুসলমান contractor দের দেওয়া হয়েছে। তার এক একজন মুসলমান contractor test work supervise করার জন্য পাঁচ হাজার টাকা পর্য্যন্ত

পেয়েছেন। হিন্দুদের ছোটখাট কাজ দেওয়া হচ্ছে, আর বড় বড় কাজগুলি মুসলমানদের দেওয়া হচ্ছে। সেখানে হিন্দুদের মনে একটা অপ্রীতিকর ভাবের সৃষ্টি করা হচ্ছে। আমি এই বিষয়ে Governmentএর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি।

তারপর agricultural loan সম্বন্ধে বলতে গেলে বলতে হয় যেভাবে loan দেওয়া হচ্ছে তাতে যাদের প্রয়োজন তারা অনেকেই পাচ্ছে না। যারা পেয়েছে তাদেরও অনেকে সময়ে কুড়ি ত্রিশ মাইল পথ হেঁটে সহরে এসে আট দশ বিশ টাকা loan নিতে হয়েছে। এইসব loan স্থানীয় Sub-Registry office হইতে পাওয়া দরকার। আমি এ বিষয়ে মন্ত্রী-মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি। আজ সেখানে অধিকাংশ লোক খেতে পাচ্ছে না। অনেকেই দুই বেলা তিন বেলা অন্তর এক বেলা খেতে পাচ্ছে। তারা অত্যন্ত দুরবস্থায় পতিত হয়েছে। সেখানকার লোকেরা যাতে ধান পেতে পারে তার ব্যবস্থা করা দরকার। Government store করে সেখানে ধান বিক্রি করার সুবিধা করা দরকার। তা না হলে আগামী বৎসর চাষ হবে না। আজ খাদ্য সমস্যা বাংলাদেশের এক বড় সমস্যা। Midnapore জেলায় এটা হচ্ছে এখন বিশিষ্ট সমস্যা। এ বৎসর ধান না হলে আবার আমাদের এই দুরবস্থার সম্মুখীন হতে হবে। আগামী বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত gratuitous relief, test relief এবং agricultural loanএর প্রয়োজন। আমি এ বিষয়ে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি। অনেক যায়গায় gratuitous relief কুড়ি, পঁচিশ, ত্রিশ per cent পর্য্যন্ত কমিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে, কোন কোন যায়গায় একেবারে বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে—আমি এ বিষয়ে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি যাতে Midnapore বাসী খেতে পায়, না খেয়ে মরে না যায় তার ব্যবস্থা করুন।

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this atmosphere of famine there has also been famine of time in this House and therefore I shall try to be very brief.

I shall, first of all, deal with the cut motion of my honourable friend, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. My honourable friend knows perfectly well that whether it be this Government or any other Government it must accept the obligation of meeting an unfortunate situation described in the three words, "distress", "scarcity", and "famine". The allotment in the budget of Rs. 13,05,000 is not guaranteed nor is it an index that if the situation in the province becomes bad, then no further amount beyond the grant which I am making——

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is it not bad at present?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: It is bad at present but Government undertakes the obligation which it has by every citizen within the province.

So far as the Famine Budget is concerned, my honourable friend knows that in 1937-38 the original budget provision was Rs. 5 lakhs: similarly, down to 1941-42 the original budget provision was Rs. 5 lakhs. In 1942-43 it is Rs. 15 lakhs. Now let me give the actual expenditure. In 1937-38 it was Rs. 3,73,000; in 1938-39 it was Rs. 56,55,000; in 1939-40 it was Rs. 33,69,000; in 1940-41 it was Rs. 10,33,000; in 1941-42 it rose to Rs. 1,05,94,000; in 1942-43 it is Rs. 94,15,000. Similar observations may be made with reference to items on gratuitous relief and test relief so that

if there is difficulty in the province, my honourable friend need not blame this Government for lack of foresight for the Government from 1937 to 1941 made an original provision of Rs. 5 lakhs but more money had to be spent because no Government can have the foresight to see the freaks of nature, so suddenly do they come.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it appears that the expenditure increased in arithmetical progression!

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The progression may be arithmetic or geometric: I am very bad in mathematics, and I do not know.

Then, Sir, I shall deal with the observations made by Mr. P. Banerji and Mr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmik. I shall give the amounts sanctioned and spent for the 24-Parganas. The amount of agricultural loan sanctioned was Rs. 4,60,000; the amount of gratuitous loan was Rs. 2,32,000 and the amount spent was Rs. 2 lakhs; the amount provided for test works was Rs. 50,000 but the amount actually spent was Rs. 62,000. The amount provided for business loans amounted to Rs. 80,000 and I have not yet had any report on that item. I have difficulties in the matter of distribution. The distribution usually takes place through official agencies, but if my honourable friends have any detailed plans I shall be glad to look into those plans.

With regard to Midnapore, a question has been raised as to whether or not gratuitous relief will come to an end. I have indicated on more occasions than one that relief will be given as long as it is necessary. Beyond that one cannot make any further statement. But I say once again that Government does accept the responsibility of dealing with the abnormal situation which may arise from time to time within this province.

My honourable friend, Dr. Bhowmik, referred to the non-distribution of relief in certain areas in Midnapore. I wish he had drawn my attention to actual facts so that I might make enquiries. My honourable friend, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, has drawn a very black and gloomy picture of the province. Well, we may have famine and scarcity, and if we have, all of us including the members sitting on the Opposition will have to share the responsibility for solving the problems in the province. It is not unknown to me nor is it unknown to him or anybody else in this House that this province is passing through an unprecedented situation, not known within the last 200 years of the British Rule in India. There may be mistakes, there will be mistakes, there will be difficulties; but the mistakes will have to be rectified and the difficulties will have to be solved, and I appeal to my honourable friends opposite to deal with the problem in a liberal spirit and not from the narrow outlook of party politics.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerji that the demand of Rs. 13,05,000 for expenditure under the head "54—Famine" be reduced by Rs. 100, was put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Hafizuddin Choudhuri that the demand of Rs. 13,05,000 for expenditure under the head "54—Famine" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee that a sum of Rs. 13,05,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "54—Famine", was then put and agreed to.

47—Miscellaneous Departments.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 5,40,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments".

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Sir, you have allowed half an hour for this item and I hope you will extend the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will extend the time by ten minutes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raise a discussion on the failure to set up a proper organisation for obtaining statistics of production of food-crops, index number of prices and other economic statistics.

Sir, I also move that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raise a discussion on the new problem of labour arising out of the present emergency and Government's failure to tackle with the same.

Sir, hardly any speech is necessary in connection with these two motions. Sir, my first motion is perfectly self-explanatory but so far as the second motion is concerned I hope you will kindly extend to my esteemed friend Mr. Bankim Mookerjee the privilege to speak on it.

Mr. W. A. M. WALKER: Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about the necessity for full utilisation and enforcement of the provisions of the Defence of India Rules relating to strikes and settlement of labour disputes.

The necessity for full co-operation between employers and labour in maintaining maximum production for the war effort has been recognised throughout the United Nations. Out of this necessity has arisen the principle that during the period of national emergency there should be no stoppage of work owing to trade disputes. This principle has, of course, also involved mutual recognition of the necessity for amicable settlement or, failing that, compulsory arbitration of labour disputes.

In Great Britain where labour is highly organised the procedure is that, where collective joint machinery for the settlement of disputes exists, disputes should be settled by that machinery. If this machinery is unsuccessful in settling the dispute, then the matter can be referred to arbitration for a decision which will be binding on all parties and no strike or lock-out may take place.

If in any particular industry collective joint machinery does not exist, or if there is no provision for reference to arbitration, then the matter is referred to a National Arbitration Tribunal established by the Minister of Labour for a decision which is binding on all parties. Lock-outs and strikes are prohibited unless the difference has been reported to the Minister and has not been referred by him for settlement within three weeks from the date on which it was reported.

In Great Britain the National Arbitration Tribunal is intended only as a last resort and for cases not covered by existing collective joint machinery. In India, where labour is not highly organised and a strong Trade Union movement has not yet developed, the emphasis is necessarily on arbitration by an independent tribunal. My first purpose in moving this cut motion is to draw attention to these two principles. On the one hand that there should be no stoppage of work owing to disputes during the national emergency and, on the other hand, that there should be compulsory arbitration of disputes during the national emergency. My second purpose is to point out that these two principles have been adopted in India under rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules and under the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance and should form the publicly declared policy of the Provincial Government.

Under rule 81A an Order was issued in March, 1942, and subsequently amended in August, 1942. This Order provides, in the first place, that there should be no strike or lock-out in any undertaking unless 14 days' previous written notice within one month of the strike or lock-out has been given and, in the second place, that where a dispute has been referred to a Court of Enquiry or Board of Conciliation under the Trade Disputes Act or for conciliation or adjudication under rule 81A, no strike or lock-out shall take place during the period from the making of the reference until the expiry of two months after the conclusion of the conciliation or arbitration proceedings. Where a dispute has been referred to adjudication under rule 81A the decision of the adjudicating body is enforceable on all parties. If a strike or lock-out occurs in contravention of these provisions, those responsible are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, or with fine, or with both.

Under the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance, an employee who abandons his employment in a notified essential service—and I think that all the major public utility companies as well as a number of essential industries have been notified—is punishable with imprisonment for a year and with fine. The Labour Commissioner has been authorised to settle disputes in such notified essential services.

My grievance with Government is that they have not fully adopted and declared these provisions as their policy and in one important instance they have ignored them. In so far as they have made any declaration of policy which could be regarded as based on these provisions it has been half-hearted and hesitating and could only have the effect of encouraging the belief that Government did not intend to enforce these provisions. In the one important instance in which Government have ignored these provisions—I refer to the Calcutta Tramway strikes—a number of strikes without notice occurred and Government took no action to enforce the law. In fact the Hon'ble the Chief Minister interfered with the enforcement of the law. On the other hand, Government did not refer the dispute to compulsory adjudication in terms of rule 81A, although at a very late stage they referred the dispute to the Labour Commissioner for his recommendations. They did not, however, make a formal reference to adjudication under rule 81A, and I do not think there has even yet been what might be described as a final award under the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance by the Labour Commissioner. I would like to emphasise that by not enforcing the law Government have encouraged the belief that they intend to ignore the law and that labour may strike without notice at any time with impunity. I ask Government to declare that the provisions of rule 81A and the Orders issued under it represent their policy and that they are prepared to utilise and enforce these provisions to the full. I ask Government to declare that, if strikes or lock-outs occur in contravention of rule 81A, those responsible for the strikes or lock-outs will be punished in terms of rule 81A.

My second main grievance is that the procedure which is at present being adopted as regards reference to adjudication under rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules is not satisfactory. References are made to individual adjudicators, a District Magistrate in one case and a Labour Commissioner in another case. This gives rise to a multiplication of decisions which are not related to each other and are sometimes conflicting. Our suggestion is that there should be a permanent adjudicating body set up unler rule 81A to which all major disputes will be referred for a decision which will be binding on both parties. This permanent adjudicating body should, we suggest, be composed of a High Court Judge and two persons of integrity with judicial experience. The permanent adjudicating body will continue in being so long as the Defence of India Rules continue in force and will lapse when they lapse. We accept this as a war measure for the period of the war, and it will have to be re-examined after the war in the light of the conditions then prevailing. We shall be glad to have from Government a declaration of their policy in this matter. If they do intend to set up a permanent adjudicating body, we shall be glad to know when it will be set up and how it will be composed. We would emphasise that its personnel must command the confidence of both employers and labour.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous" be reduced by Rs. 100, to discuss the policy.

During the last budget debate we were assured by Government that they would take steps in right earnest to tackle the labour problem, but I am sorry to say nothing has been done yet. We, the members of this House, representing the Labour assembled at the House of the then Labour Minister, and placed our demand before him and requested him to form an Advisory Board to advise him so that strikes and dislocation might be avoided. He agreed but did not move in the matter. I may just cite an instance how the matter was tackled during his time. There was a strike in the Bengal Provincial Railway. I telegraphed him, acquainted him with all the facts and figures; I personally approached him and explained to him the situation and he assured me that he would intervene in the matter as soon as written statements were submitted to him. That was done and when I saw him for the second time he told me that he had referred the matter to the Labour Commissioner to examine whether a Court of Enquiry or Arbitration could be arranged. I enquired of the Labour Commissioner who said that he had received nothing from the Labour Minister. This is the way, Sir, that things are going on at the present time. There were various disturbances. The main causes of the disturbances seem to be that the employers refuse to grant dearness allowances to their workers. There were strikes in the city, there were strikes outside the city, but the Hon'ble Minister failed to do anything in the matter.

Then, Sir, on the failure of the then Minister in charge of Labour, the portfolio was transferred to another hand and we thought that something would come out of this change, but up till now we do not see any change of policy.

It may be mentioned here that the Bombay Government passed an Industrial Dispute Act in 1938. A permanent Industrial Court has been set up under this Act. The Labour Commissioner is the *ex-officio* Chief Conciliator. A provision has been made for conciliation and arbitration of disputes. But this Government has failed to do anything of that sort, though we are told that the Government contemplated to bring up such a legislation.

I now place before the House a few more instances of how the question of disputes is being tackled by the Government machinery. There is a strike in the French Motor Car Company from 30th January, 1942, and it is still going on. They applied to the Labour Commissioner for adjudication and an adjudicator was appointed who has given his award in favour of the Company in contravention of clause 1(*c*) of the Defence of India Rules which specifically laid down: ..... requiring employers to observe such terms and conditions of employment as may be determined in accordance with the order to be, or to be not less favourable than, those existing in their respective undertakings at any time within three months preceding the date of the order." A short-notice question was tabled by me on 16th February, 1943, which was acknowledged by the Secretary, Legislative Assembly, on 18th February 1943. On 8th March, 1943, *i.e.*, after 18 days I was informed that the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Labour and Commerce has declined to accept short notice. The grievance of the

workers is that their working hours have been increased from 45½ hours a week to 48 hours a week without the consequent increase of wages.

Next I like to deal with the question of minimum wage. The principle of minimum wage has now been accepted as being fair, reasonable and necessary by all advanced industrial countries. It consists in guaranteeing to the worker at least a bare living wage. No attempt has yet been made by this Government to examine the problem although they have been reminded on several occasions. There are strong arguments in favour of fixing minimum wage rates. After all Labour has a right to an adequate share in the national dividend; and anyhow it is desirable in the interests of industry itself that wage level should at least be sufficient to maintain the workers in efficient existence. In the absence of such a measure some employers take the advantage of exploiting Labour. You will be surprised to learn, Sir, that the Bengal Provincial Railway pay to the workers Rs. 8 a month; these men were getting Rs. 10 originally, and now in these hard days their pay has been reduced from Rs. 10 to Rs. 8 a month. There was a strike, but no action was taken by the Government, although they applied for quick disposal of the application under section 3 of Trade Dispute Act and requested the Government to apply the Defence of India Rules (rule 81A).

A word may be said about the institution of collective bargaining. My honourable friend Mr. Walker has just mentioned what is collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is one of the most effective preventives of industrial disputes. Collective bargaining supposes that the organisation of workers and organisation of employers negotiate with each other on a collective basis and conclude agreements which are effective for a certain period of time and are legally enforceable. Such agreements tend to promote industrial peace for since the agreements are unaltered for a specific period of time sudden and isolated disputes become impossible. We ought, therefore, to analyse the various methods that may be employed for the prevention of disputes when they are in sight or settlement if they can be prevented.

Then, Sir, I want to mention another point, *i.e.*, the question of extension of the Wage Act. The Wage Act operates on railways and factories and those who are drawing less than Rs. 200 are the only persons to come under this Act, but in the case of other employments this has not been so, and the result is that their cases go to the civil courts for trial. The Provincial Government may issue administrative orders extending the operation of the provisions of the Wage Act to other employments. If that is done, then the Commissioner, Workmen's Compensation Court, will also function with respect to these cases and can easily dispose of them and these men need not go to the civil courts. That is necessary and Government should do that.

There is another instance of hardship to the workmen whose claims for compensation for injuries are dealt with. The office of the Commissioner, Workmen's Compensation Act, is undermanned. They cannot deal with

the cases promptly. The result is that the cases are unusually delayed and the workers cannot get compensation from the court in time. The Commissioner cannot sit for more than three days a week and dispose of the cases. There is insufficiency of staff in his office. He has been given nine clerks but no record clerk. In the District Courts where 11,000 cases are handled there is a record clerk, whereas in this office the number of cases handled is over 36,000. In spite of that, not a single clerk has been given to serve as a record clerk in that office. Sir, you can easily understand the position of these workmen who are injured and their dependents have to wait indefinitely for their compensation money and you can understand how the wives and children of the men who died of injuries through accidents suffer. They live on charity sometimes without any food for days together. In order to remove this hardship and expedite the dosposal of cases, a sufficient number of clerks should be provided in the office of the Commissioner, Workmen's Compensation Court.

Another question I want to place before you, Sir, before I resume my seat is that the cases of the dependents of Indian seamen who are either killed by enemy action or detained as prisoners of war. Their compensation and pension cases are delayed as the Shipping Office on receipt of such information send the papers to local authorities. On receipt of the information, enquiries are made and the local officer reports about the number of eligible dependants. The report along with the necessary papers is submitted to the Government of India and the Government of India sanction the money. After that, money is distributed through the local officers to the dependants.

Now the position is this. The local authorities never take prompt action. They sit tight upon the papers and the result is that these men and their families have to live on charity. I have received several complaints about this and I made an engagement with the officer dealing with such cases. He said that District Officers generally do not take prompt action.

Sir, I, therefore, hope that the Hon'ble Minister will take steps so that these cases are dealt with promptly by the local officers.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, আমার পূর্ববর্তী বক্তা যাহা বলিয়া গিয়াছেন তাহার উপসংহার হইতে আরম্ভ করিতে চাই। আমি বলিতে চাই যে জাহাজীরা সমুদ্রে যাইয়া প্রাণ বিসর্জন করিলে তাহাদের পুত্র-পরিবারবর্গকে যে compensation দেওয়া হয় তাহা অতি বিলম্বে দেওয়া হয় এবং এই compensation বিতরিত হয় জিলা মেজিষ্ট্রেট বরাবরে। অনেক ক্ষেত্রে অতিদূর হইতে অসহায় নারীদের পায়ে হাঁটিয়া অথবা গরুর গাড়ীতে করিয়া আসিয়া এই অর্থ লইতে হয়। এইরূপ বহুবার আবেদন করা হইয়াছে যে এই সমস্ত জাহাজীদের আত্মীয়-স্বজনের প্রাপ্য যে অর্থ তাহা স্থানীয় অফিসারদের বরাবরে বিতরিত করা হউক। শুধু তাহাই নহে। জাহাজীরা বিদেশে যাইয়া যখন বন্দি আটক থাকে তখন তাহাদের পুত্রপরিবারবর্গের জন্য কোনরূপ ব্যবস্থা এখন করা হয় না। ইহা ছাড়া জাহাজীদের খাদ্য সমস্যা সমাধানের জন্য কলিকাতার বন্দরে বা তাহাদের নিজেদের গ্রামে কোনরূপ ব্যবস্থা করা হয় নাই। ইহার ফলে বহু জাহাজীদের পরিবারবর্গ অনাহারে দিনাতিপাত করিতেছে। আমার পূর্ববর্তী বক্তা Mr. Walker

শ্রমিক এবং মালিকের মধ্যে সদ্ভাব স্থাপনের জন্য যে ব্যবস্থার কথা বলিয়া গিয়াছেন এবং যে ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন movementএর কথা উল্লেখ করিয়াছেন, সুখের বিষয় হইত যদি সত্য সত্যই সেই জিনিষ এখানে নিয়োজিত করা হইত। তিনি তাঁহার বক্তৃতায় বলিয়াছেন ইংলণ্ড এবং আমেরিকায় মালিকরা শ্রমিকদের সহিত সম্বন্ধ ভাল রাখিবার জন্য প্রত্যেক মালিকই শ্রমিকের খাদ্যের ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন একথা সত্য। কিন্তু এখানে জাহাজীদের জন্য জাহাজের মালিকের সেরূপ কোন ব্যবস্থা করেন নাই। বারম্বার অনুরোধ করা সত্বেও সরকার এই পর্য্যন্ত সেদিকে কোন ভ্রূক্ষেপ করেন নাই। তারপর তিনি বলিয়াছেন strike করিবার পূর্ব্বে পরামর্শ করিবার জন্য বিলাতে trade dispute settlement machinery নামক একটি body আছে। সুখের বিষয় হইত যদি সেরূপ body এখানে স্থাপন করা হইত। অনেক চেষ্টা করিয়াও আমরা তাহা করিতে পারি নাই। এখানকার সরকার ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন movement মানিতে চান না যাহার জন্য এরূপ settlement machinery এখানে আমরা দেখিতে পাই না। তারপর তিনি যে committee arbritrationর কথা বলিয়াছেন তাহাও এখানে তৈয়ারী করা হয় নাই। তিনি যে সমস্ত suggestion দিয়া গিয়াছেন আমি সেইগুলি সর্ব্বান্তঃকরণে সমর্থন করি। তিনি বলিয়াছেন অন্ততঃ বর্ত্তমান সময়ের জন্য একটি সালীশি বোর্ড গঠনের কথা। এটা যদি সত্যই তৈয়ারী হয় তাহা হইলে আমার মনে হয় এই বিষয়ের একটা সুব্যবস্থা হইতে পারে।

Mr. B. MUKHERJEE : Mr Speaker, Sir, Mr Walker একটী কথা বিশেষ কোরে বলেছেন, সেটা হচেচ labour disputes মিটাবার জন্য arbitration এর প্রয়োজন। এ বিষয়ে আমরা লেবারের তরফ থেকে একেবারে তাঁর সহিত সহমত এবং এ দাবী আমরা বরাবর জানিয়ে আস্‌চি। কিন্তু arbitration মানে arbitrary arbitration নয়। আমরা চাই যে arbitration হউক এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের তরফ থেকে কতকগুলি নীতি পরিস্কার থাকা দরকার যে কি ভাবে ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন এলাউন্স দেওয়া হবে, time limit সম্বন্ধে এবং অন্যান্য অভিযোগ সম্বন্ধে procedure থাকা উচিত। এ সমস্তই আমরা চাই। দুঃখের বিষয় এই সম্পর্কে মিঃ ওয়াকার ট্রামওয়ে strikeএর উল্লেখ করেছেন এবং প্রধান-মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের হস্তক্ষেপের কথা বলেছেন। এই একমাত্র ঘটনা যাতে Premier intervene করেন এবং সহরকে একটা ভয়াবহ দুরবস্থার ভিতর থেকে রক্ষা করেছিলেন। সেটাকে যে তিনি একটা অভিযোগের বিষয় কোরে তুলেছেন এটা অত্যন্ত দুঃখের বিষয়। ট্রামওয়ে ধর্ম্মঘট যদি সেই সময় ঐভাবে মিটান না হ'ত তাহ'লে পর আজকে কলিকাতার অবস্থা কি হত তা বোধ হয় যাঁরা লেবারের ভিতর থাকেন তাঁরা জানেন আর যাঁরা পঞ্চম বাহিনী তাঁরাও জানেন। গত আগষ্ট মাসের আন্দোলনে এবং ডিসেম্বর ও জানুয়ারীর bombingএ প্রমাণ হয়ে গেছে যে ট্রামওয়ে ইউনিয়নের ওয়ার্কারেরা আজকে সমস্ত কলিকাতার শ্রমিকদের nerve centre। তারা সেখানে স্থিরভাবে আছে বোলে প্রায় সমস্ত শ্রমিকদের টেনে এবং আট্‌কে রাখ্‌তে পারে, আর সেই জিনিসটা সম্ভব হ'ত না যদি Tramway worker দের কতকগুলি অভিযোগ ঐ ভাবে না মিট্‌ত। এটা অভিযোগের বিষয় মোটেই নয়। দুঃখের বিষয় ট্রামওয়ে কোম্পানীর লাভের আশা অত্যন্ত বেশী এবং তাঁরা সেজন্য যে ভাবে চলতে চান সেই ভাবে চল্‌লে পর ভয়ানক দুর্ঘটনা ঘট্‌ত। সম্প্রতি ট্রামওয়ে কোম্পানী bombing এর পর বাধ্য হয়েছেন স্বীকার ক'র্‌তে যে ট্রামওয়ে কর্ম্মচারীদের পাকা বাড়ী বিনা ভাড়ায় দেওয়া হবে। আজ যেমন bombing সামান্য রকম বন্ধ হয়েছে কোম্পানী midday ticket বন্ধ ক'রেছেন, transfer ticket বন্ধ ক'রেছেন, petrol rationing হওয়াতে বাসের চলাচল কম হয়েছে বোলে monopoly business ক'র্‌তে সচেষ্ট; আর তাঁদের যাত্রীরও

অভাব নাই কিন্তু যাত্রীদের কোন রকম সুব্যবস্থা কর্‌বেন না। আজকে bombing বন্ধ হওয়ার সুযোগ পাওয়াতে সেই কর্ম্মচারীদের নিকট থেকে বাড়ী ভাড়া আদায় কর্‌বার চেষ্টা ক'র্‌চেন এইটাই তাঁদের কার্য্যের নীতি।

তারপরে দেখুন jute magnates বা কি ক'র্‌চেন। বজ্‌বজে বোমা পড়ার পরে যখন লোক পালিয়ে যায় সেই সময় Andrew Yule কোম্পানী যে ভাবে বলেছিলেন তাতে তাদের পঞ্চম বাহিনী বল্‌লে অত্যুক্তি হয় না এবং তাঁদের managementএর বিরুদ্ধে এই অভিযোগ ক'র্‌তে পারি। বজবজ থেকে যখন লোক পালিয়ে যায় তখন যে সমস্ত শ্রমিকেরা গ্রামে গ্রামে গিয়ে অন্য শ্রমিকদের ডেকে এনে কাজ চালিয়েছিল তাদের ২৫।৩০ জনকে চাকরী থেকে তাড়িয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। লেবার কমিশনারের দৃষ্টি এদিকে আকর্ষণ করা হয়েছে কিন্তু কোন ফল হয় নাই। আজকে সেখানে প্রায় একশ লোককে তাড়ান হয়েছে, কেননা সেখানকার ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন নেতাদের সঙ্গে সেখানকার শ্রমিকদের পরম বিশ্বস্ততা। তারপর গত বৎসরের প্রথমে যখন ধর্ম্মঘট হয়েছিল, যখন সামসুদ্দীন আহমেদ্ সাহেব, ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী প্রভৃতি মন্ত্রীরা সেখানে গিয়ে দেখে বলেছিলেন যে আবেল বোলে যে শ্রমিক নেতা তাকে চাকরী দিতে হবে, কিন্তু সেই মন্ত্রীদের সাধ্য হয় নি jute magnates দের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ করার। তাঁরা সে আদেশ অমান্য করার পর অম্লান বদনে সেটা সহ্য কোরেছেন। Jute supply বন্ধ কোরে Andrew Yule কোম্পানীকে বাধ্য কর্‌তে পারেন নি। মন্ত্রীদের prestige ত রাখা উচিত, কিন্তু ঐ ভাবে Andrew Yule কোম্পানী সেটা উপেক্ষা কোরে চলেছিলেন এবং Jute Mill Association'ও সম্পূর্ণ উপেক্ষা কোরে চলে এসেছিলেন। এই সমস্ত ব্যাপারের ভিতর দিয়ে দেখা যায় ধনী সম্প্রদায়ের কি মনোভাব এবং কিরূপে তাঁরা কাজ কোরে থাকেন। সম্প্রতি আর একটা দুর্ঘটনা ঘটেছে। চেঙ্গাইলে প্রেমচাঁদ জুট মিলে যে সময় bombing হয় সেই সময় যখন হিন্দুস্থানী শ্রমিকেরা পালিয়ে যায় তখন সেখানে যারা কাজ চালিয়েছিল সেই bombing এর পর তাদের অবস্থা কি? সেখানকার একটী বিশেষ সর্দ্দার যে সবচেয়ে বেশী উৎসাহ দেখিয়েছিল লোক পালানর ব্যাপারে আজ যে ফিরে আসার পরে তার লোককে নেওয়া হচ্চে এবং তার ফলে যখন অন্যান্য শ্রমিকেরা আপত্তি করে তখন তাদের উপর গুলী চলেছে, সেখানকার ৫ জন শ্রমিকের বিরুদ্ধে মোকদ্দমা চল্‌ছে এবং দুজন শ্রমিক নেতা রামাচরণ ও বাবুলাল—একজন হিন্দু, একজন মুসলমান—তাদের security prisoner কোরে রাখা হয়েছে। তারপর ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেট সাহেব গিয়ে তদন্ত কোরে বল্‌তে বাধ্য হয়েছিলেন যে এক শত জন লোক যাদের ছাঁটাই করা হয়েছিল তাদের চাকরী দিতে হবে। তিনি সম্পূর্ণ convinced যে সেখানকার কোম্পানী পঞ্চম বাহিনীর কার্য্য কোরে চলেছে কিন্তু সে বোঝা সত্ত্বেও আজও সেই দুজনকে security prisoner কোরে রাখা হয়েছে, তাদের ছাড়েন নি। এই যে অবস্থা চলেছে এই সমস্ত জুট্ মিলে তাতে বোঝা যায় তাঁরা প্রাণপণ চেষ্টা কর্‌বেন যাতে বাংলাদেশে জুটের ভিতর ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন গড়ে উঠ্‌তে বা শক্তিশালী হ'তে না পারে। তারপর দিল্লীতে স্থির হয়েছিল যে শ্রমিকদের ফুড্ সাপ্লাইএর জন্য Standing General Committee করা হবে এবং সেই General Committeeতে লেবারের প্রতিনিধি থাক্‌বে, অথচ জুট মিল ষ্টোর manage করার ব্যাপারে সে দিকে কতটুকু করা হয়েছে? এই রকম সমস্ত জিনিস থেকে দেখা যায় যে এখানকার capitalist মনোভাব কি রকম। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দেখি গভর্ণমেণ্টের মনোভাব আরও অদ্ভুত। মাত্র কয়েক দিন বোমা পড়ে নি। সেবার ত জাপান কলিকাতার business dislocate করতে এসেছিল; কিন্তু যদি আরও serious bombing হয় তাহলে কলিকাতার অবস্থা অত্যন্ত শোচনীয়

হবে। এ সম্বন্ধে যখন আমরা public morale বা labourerএর morale ঠিক রাখ্‌বার জন্য তাদের ভিতর meeting করতে চাই তাহলে তার জন্য permission পাওয়া যায় না। বারবার পুলিশ কমিশনারকে জানান হয়েছে, কিন্তু পুলিশ কমিশনার যে চিঠি দিয়েছেন তার ভিতর classical ভাব এত যে সেটাকে মিউজিয়মে রাখা চল্‌তে পারে। তিনি জবাবে বলেছেন যে bombing বন্ধ হয়েছে বোলে pro-Japanese mentality বেড়ে যাবে তা ঠিক নয়; জাপান যাতে আর না আক্রমণ ক'রতে পারে সে ব্যবস্থা হচেচ এবং বাংলার লোকেরা কি স্বর্গীয় রবীন্দ্রনাথের কথা ভুলে গেছে যে জাপানের পক্ষে হয়ে যাবে? কাজেই তিনি কিছুই দিতে চান না। Bombing যখন হচেচ, লোক পালাচেচ তখন আমরা বল্‌লাম আমাদের হাতে situation ছেড়ে দাও, আমাদের হাতে van দাও; কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট কিছুতেই রাজী হলেন না। আমাদের অভিযোগ করবার ৩।৪ দিন পরে van বেরুল বটে কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট ভ্যান্ শ্রমিকদের কাছে কিছু বল্‌তে গেলে কি ফল হয় সকলে জানেন। কারণ গভর্ণমেণ্ট চিরকাল capitalist দের side নিয়েছেন। অথচ আমাদের তরফ থেকে সেই সমস্ত লোককে বোঝাবার সকল সুযোগ কেড়ে নেওয়া হয়েছিল। ফলে আজ সেখান থেকে যদি exodus হয় সেটা জানাবার উপায় নাই। আজ পর্য্যন্ত যে সুযোগ পাওয়া গেছে, এই Japanese bombing এর মাঝখানে যে ফাঁকটুকু পাওয়া গেছে এই সুযোগের যদি আমরা সদ্ব্যবহার কর্‌তে পারি তাহলে পরে যদি ভবিষ্যতে দারুণ অবস্থা হয় ত সে সম্বন্ধে আমরা যথেষ্ট ব্যবস্থা কর্‌তে পারি, মিটিং কোরে যাতে লোকের morale রক্ষা কর্‌তে পারা যায় তা কর্‌তে পারি।

তারপর dearness allowance সম্বন্ধে এখানে অদ্ভুত রকম অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট আজ পর্য্যন্ত statistics নেবার ব্যবস্থা করেন নি। বোম্বাইতে living wage index নেওয়া হয় কিন্তু আমাদের এখানে না নেওয়ার দরুণ আজ পর্য্যন্ত যেমন ধীরে ধীরে জিনিসপত্রের দাম বাড়্‌চে, living cost বাড়্‌চে তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে dearness allowance বাড়াবার সুযোগ নাই। এখানে কোন index নাই এবং index রাখ্‌বার চেষ্টাও নাই। অথচ গত কয়েক মাস থেকে দেখ্‌চি বোম্বাইতে প্রত্যেক মাসে ৬ পয়েণ্ট বেড়ে যাচেচ living cost index এবং সেখানে index ২৪০এর কাছাকাছি চলে গেছে। অথচ dearness allowance সামান্য ৪৲।৫৲।৭৲ টাকা। সে বিষয়ে কোন uniform policy নাই। এখানকার jute magnateরা মনে করেন যে cheap grant দিয়ে কাজ চালাবেন। বোম্বাইএ ২২।২৩৲ টাকা এবং আমেদাবাদে ২৫৲ টাকা কোরে দেওয়া হয়। আমেদাবাদে sliding grade কোরে দেওয়া হয়, কিন্তু এখানে সে রকম ব্যবস্থা নাই। এখানকার European business magnateদের চেষ্টা যাতে sliding scaleএ dearness allowance না হয়, এবং তার সঙ্গে দেখ্‌তে পাচ্চি গভর্ণমেণ্টের সম্পূর্ণ সহযোগিতা রয়েছে। তাঁরা এখানে কোন রকম statistics নেবার চেষ্টা করেন নি এবং dearness allowance যথেষ্ট নয়।

তারপর shelter সম্বন্ধে আমরা দেখতে পাই—

(At this stage the member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I like to bring to the notice of the Government the wretched conditions of the tea garden labourers of the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Everybody knows that the price of tea has gone up by 4 to 5 hundred per cent., but the wages

of the labourers are the same as were before the war. If the price of foodstuffs had not gone up so high as at present, they could manage somehow or other though the wages are not sufficient even for normal times. They are even now getting only 4 annas per *hazira*, *i.e.*, for half-day, and when they get double *hazira*, *i.e.*, 8 annas per day, they get double *hazira* only for 3 or 4 days a week. When the tea gardens are earning lakhs and lakhs of rupees, and the Managers are getting thousands and thousands of rupees as bonus per year over and above their fat salary on account of war the coolies on whom the whole tea industry depends do not get enough even for the bare necessaries of life. At least in these abnormal times the employers should have come forward themselves and increased the wages of the labourers in consideration of the abnormal rise in price of foodstuffs, but as they do not seem to look to the interest of the labourers, I appeal to the Government to pass a legislation fixing the minimum wages of the labourers whether of the tea gardens or of any other industries.

Some time in 1938 or 1939 when I gave notice of a resolution in the Assembly to the effect that the wages of male coolies, female coolies and *chokras* should be fixed at 12 annas, 8 annas and 6 annas, respectively, there was a great sensation amongst the planters. Since that time much change has taken place. So I suggest that the minimum wages should be fixed as follows:—

Male coolies—one rupee.
Female coolies—12 annas.
Chokra coolies—8 annas.

This may be done for the duration of the war.

My second point is that the tea garden coolies are being turned out of the gardens at any moment at the sweet will of the Managers, no matter for how many generations they may be living in the garden. Near about 50 per cent. of the population of Darjeeling are tea garden labourers and they have made the tea gardens their home and hearth. So these people must have some sort of status in the gardens. I appeal to the Government to look into these matters carefully and do something to redress the grievances of the labourers.

We are on the sixth year of provincial autonomy. We thought that under the administration of the popular Government, at least the poorer class of people would be a bit happier but it is otherwise, that is, the conditions of the poorer classes of people have become worse than before. They have not done anything for the poor people. Just a few minutes ago Mr. Walker has suggested that the Defence of India Rules should be applied, but may I enquire whether by applying the Defence of India Rules Government will be able to solve the root cause of the strikes satisfactorily? Sir, I think the disease is due to low wages and unless and until the wages are increased, there will be no end of the trouble.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it will not be possible for me to deal with all the various points that have been raised in the course of the debate, and I would therefore confine myself to saying something with regard to the general policy.

Sir, in the course of his remarks my friend, Mr. Walker, remarked that on one occasion I interfered in a labour dispute: I know the incident to which he has referred, and I plead not guilty to the charge, and I wish to submit that I did not interfere but I certainly intervened because the Labour Commissioner was not available then. And I am glad to be able to tell the House that the settlement which I effected has been of lasting benefit to the employees and the Tramway Company. Even during the disturbances in Calcutta, as a result of that settlement, the Tramway employees did not flinch one single inch from their duty. However, I have admitted later on that I considered the point that it was not quite proper for me to go directly into the dispute, and I have since maintained the position that the machinery of Government which has been in existence should be the only machinery for intervention between the employer and the employee.

Now, Sir, as regards the motion of my friend Dr. Sanyal in so far as it refers to the failure to set up a proper organization for obtaining statistics of production of food-crops, I submit that it is a matter for the Agriculture Department, and as regards index number of prices and other economic statistics, an attempt is being made to obtain these statistics. At the present moment, I am afraid, I cannot say anything further.

Then, Sir, as regards the general policy, I submit that we have got at the present moment a definite policy regarding labour. Before I refer to that I will dispose of one or two points of a general character. So far as labour disputes are concerned, we have to remember that under rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules these matters are generally dealt with. Rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules lays down that no person employed in any undertaking may go on strike in connection with any trade dispute without having given to his employer 14 days' previous notice. This rule applies to undertakings run for trade or business and not to undertakings like the Corporation of Calcutta or the Port Commissioners. But these are covered now by the Essential Services (Maintenance) Ordinance. Under this Ordinance no employee may abandon his work without previous consent of the employer. The order under rule 81A declaring a strike without notice illegal came into force early in March last year. The Essential Services (Maintenance) Ordinance came into force earlier in December, 1941. For a time it was not thought advisable that prosecutions against strikers without notice should be launched. But in October last year the position was further considered, and it was thought that these provisions of law had been in force for a sufficiently long time and that while propaganda on the necessity of giving notice should be increased action should be taken against those responsible for any breach of the law in this respect as opportunities occurred. Instructions to this effect were actually issued to local officers on the 24th October, 1942.

Lately all disputes wherein conciliation has failed have been referred to adjudication. Where strike is without notice, the policy ordinarily is to refuse to refer the dispute to adjudication until the men returned to work. Before the dispute breaks into a strike or stoppage of work is caused, the Labour Commissioner with his officers is on the alert, making enquiries,

bringing parties together and exploring every possibility of an amicable settlement between the employers and the workers who are affected. When conciliation fails, the Labour Commissioner reports the facts to Government and if Government are satisfied that the dispute affects war effort or the maintenance of essential supplies, they do not hesitate to refer it for adjudication.

The adjudicators, so long, used to be a District Officer, the Assistant Labour Commissioner, the Claims Officer, Calcutta, and the Commissioner, Workmen's Compensation Act.

As regards a permanent machinery for adjudication, Government saw the desirability of it long ago. They realised that in this matter of adjudication it was desirable to have uniformity in the decisions reached and that the adjudicator should be like a Court of record where previous decisions could be looked into. The decision that Government have come to now is that a permanent Court should be established. The President of the Court should be a Judge of the status of a High Court Judge. This should be following the Bombay example. Government have already taken steps with a view to securing the services of a High Court Judge early for this work. The other personnel of the Court is still under consideration. For instance, whether there should be additional members of the Court or the Court should consist of a single Judge only are matters of detail which would be decided very shortly. The question of due representation of employers and workers is also under consideration. Government are tentatively of the opinion that a suitable method of representation of employers would be to constitute panels for different industries. These panels would be framed in consultation with the industries and when a dispute occurs pertaining to a particular industry one or two persons out of the panel may be asked to represent the case before the Court. Direct representation of employers on the Court is not considered advisable.

As regards representation of labour, Government have not yet come to any decision. This is because of the non-existence of large and representative Unions in the province. But the matter is being considered in consultation with the Labour Commissioner. Like the employers some method will be found for the labour affected to represent its case fully before the Court.

As regards the position of the Labour Commissioner it must be emphasized that the Labour Commissioner as Chief Conciliator is an impartial officer. He takes no side either with labour or with employers. His duty is to look to the interests of both, and when a dispute occurs to bring them together and to see that a settlement is reached between them amicably.

Finally, there is the question of making a declaration of their policy specially with regard to the arrest of strikers who have given no notice. The statement now made by me may be taken as a declaration of Government policy on the subject.

As regards the particular question of a formal announcement of our intention to prosecute strikers who give no notice, I would like to explain that while necessary instructions have already been conveyed to local officers no formal announcement of their intention has been given either to employers or workers. This was on advice from the Government of India who thought that such publicity would not be desirable at present.

But I would emphasize the fact that although the Government have always been very anxious to secure the full amount of relief that can be given to labour under present conditions, our policy is to apply the Defence of India Rules most rigorously in order that the strikes may be reduced so far as frequency is concerned to the utmost possible minimum. If it is found that there is no reasonable justification for any strike or that the strike has been undertaken in infringement of the rules and regulations now in force, the most stringent measures will be taken under the Defence of India Rules, because we consider that the maintenance of essential services is of the utmost and paramount importance.

Now, Sir, as regards my friend Mr. Gurung's point regarding the tea industry, I may mention that while we are in full sympathy with the points he has made on labour I may point out that the industry has not been unmindful of the convenience of labourers. At the present moment when the price of rice has been rising so high I am informed that in the tea plantation areas the employers have been selling rice at not more than Rs. 8 per maund. They obtain it at a higher cost and distribute it at a cheaper cost to the labour. This is a concession which we all very gratefully acknowledge and I think on this point at any rate it cannot be said that the tea planters have been extremely selfish. Secondly, Sir, I would enter a plea in favour of the tea planters because if unfortunately rice becomes short we will be able to drink tea. (Laughter.) Therefore, we cannot ignore the importance of tea in the vital statistics of the province of Bengal.

I hope, Sir, I have made the Government position regarding policy clear, and I therefore hope that the motions for reduction will be withdrawn.

Mr. W. A. M. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the Hon'ble Chief Minister's assurance, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. W. A. M. Walker that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Mr. J. N. Gupta that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 5,40,000 for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq that a sum of Rs. 5,40,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "47—Miscellaneous Departments" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 1-30 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Monday, the 15th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 15th March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 182 members.

(After starred question No. 141 was called.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has received information just now about the precarious illness of a relation of his and he has left the House. He will be coming back within half an hour. In the meantime will you be good enough to take up the questions of any other Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think in the circumstances stated it will be desirable that the questions to be answered by the Hon'ble Chief Minister stand over.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will they be answered today?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: He will be coming within half an hour's time.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Ravages of cyclone in Midnapore district.

***146. Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing with regard to the cyclone in the Midnapore district:—

(*i*) the number of villages and areas affected both by the cyclone and the tidal bore;

(*ii*) the number of villages and areas affected by the cyclone alone;

(*iii*) the number of cattle lost;

(*iv*) the number of houses destroyed or otherwise made unfit for habitation;

(*v*) the number of school buildings collapsed or otherwise made unfit for use;

(*vi*) the number of persons dead on account of ailments caused by the after-effect of cyclone;

(*vii*) the total value of properties lost; and

(*viii*) the total value of standing crops lost?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the statement appearing in the Calcutta newspapers that about 40,000 persons died due to the havoc in Midnapore is correct?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the correct figure?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*)(*i*) Villages—about 1,600, area—about 900 square miles.

(*ii*) Villages—about 7,400, area—about 3,300 square miles.

(*iii*) About 188,000.

(*iv*) About 527,000.

(*v*) Estimated at about 1,900.

(*vi*) Deaths from cholera and bacillary dysentery would be about 1,600. Deaths from other causes not available.

(*vii*) Such valuation can only be based on a wild guess.

(*viii*) About 11 crores of rupees.

(*b*) and (*c*) The number of deaths ascertained by detailed survey is—

Contai	... ...	10,932
Tamluk	... ...	2,909
Ghatal	... ...	31
Jhargram	... ...	2
Sadar (North)	... ...	69
Sadar (South)	... ...	500
	Total ...	14,443

Sanction of short term crop loan to Goalundo Central Co-operative Bank.

***147. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement, showing year by year, for the years—

(1) 1938-39,

(2) 1939-40,

(3) 1940-41, and

(4) 1941-42,

(*a*) the amounts paid by Government through the agency of the Bengal Co-operative Provincial Bank, Ltd., to the Goalundo Central Co-operative Bank for distribution as short-term crop loan; and

(*b*) the outstanding amount that remained unpaid up to the 31st December, 1942, and in each of the financial years from 1938 to 1942?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) and (*b*) A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement.

			Rs.
(*a*) 1938-39	...	...	Nil
1939-40	...	...	65,218
1940-41	...	...	15,535
1941-42	...	...	59,421
(*b*) On the 31st December, 1942	...	...	12,083
1938-39	...	...	Nil
1939-40	...	...	Nil
1940-41	...	...	Nil
1941-42	...	...	Nil

Failure of paddy crops in Coalundo subdivision.

***148. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that paddy crops failed almost entirely in the subdivision of Goalundo in 1942, and that the people are in distress;

(*ii*) that seeds for next crops are not available with the cultivators and in the market; and

(*iii*) that sowing starts in the month of March in this area?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of supplying seeds to the agriculturists?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): Yes.

Production and stocks of paddy in Bengal.

***149. Khan Bahadur AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total quantity of paddy grown in the Province of Bengal this year;

(*ii*) the total stock of surplus paddy available for this year;

(*iii*) the total quantity of paddy required for the consumption for the people of this Province;

(*iv*) the total quantity of paddy exported, if any, from Bengal both husked and unhusked?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of—

(1) deficit districts, and

(2) surplus districts,

showing separately the total outturn of district?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the Government of Assam have stopped export of rice and paddy to Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) The actual figure is not known. The crop forecast is 6,938,800 tons (in terms of clean husked rice).

(*ii*) The figure is not known but it is known that the previous *aman* crop was excellent, the nett exports not above normal in the circumstances and the last *aus* crop disappointing.

(*iii*) No accurate estimate is possible but on the basis of crop forecast figures and nett imports the consumption in the three years preceding last year could not exceed 74 lakhs of tons.

(*iv*) 1·5 lakhs tons nett in 1941-42.

(*b*) The districts cannot be thus classified as they are not self-contained units throughout the year, and any comparison of estimated outturns with theoretical figures of consumption is misleading. There are deficit areas in most districts even when the whole district is surplus.

(*c*) Exports from one Province to another are now controlled by the Government of India.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he means by "the year"? Does he mean 1349 or 1348?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: 1349.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to his answer in the latter part of (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which are the districts that have deficit areas though the districts themselves are surplus?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Calcutta of course has no production, and so the question of its being deficit or surplus does not arise.

24-Parganas is a deficit district—the approximate outturn is 19,74,200 maunds, whereas the probable consumption is 25,24,000 maunds. So there would be a deficit of about 6,00,000 maunds.

Nadia is also a deficit district, though only to a small extent—about 1,00,000 maunds.

Murshidabad is also a deficit district. Of course here the deficit is great.

Jessore is not practically a deficit district—the production being 7·47 and the consumption 7·81. Strictly speaking it is not a deficit district.

Khulna is a surplus district.

Burdwan is a deficit district to a large extent.

Birbhum is practically neither a deficit nor a surplus district—it is almost equal, the production being 4·1 and the consumption 4·4.

Bankura, Midnapore, Hooghly and Howrah are deficit districts.

Rajshahi is a deficit district to a small extent.

Jalpaiguri is nominally deficit, the production being 4·65 and the consumption 4·66. So practically it is not a deficit district.

Darjeeling, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, Malda, Dacca, Mymensingh, and Faridpur, are deficit districts.

Bakarganj is a surplus district.

Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali are deficit districts.

Chittagong Hill Tracts is a deficit district to a small extent.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why, if Khulna is a surplus district, export of paddy from that district has been prohibited?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course that is under the order of the Government of India. We are not responsible for it.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the outturn of paddy or rice in Bakarganj district and the actual quantity required there?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The outturn in Bakarganj is 1,69,29,200 maunds. As for the requirements there I cannot say without calculation. According to our estimate 344 lbs. per head per annum is taken to be the annual consumption. Now, if you take into account the total outturn of the district of Bakarganj you can easily ascertain it.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that last week the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Commerce and Labour stated that the estimate of production there was 73,00,000 tons as compared with its requirements of 69,00,000?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course, I have given the figure of rice. I want to explain the point here that approximate outturn is not a reliable account at all. I myself doubt, as everyone knows, whether the figures which are collected through chaukidars can be relied on. As for consumption we have taken it at 344 lbs. per head per annum on average. It might be that the number of sucklings and children may be greater, but still we have taken it at 344 lbs. Besides, the last census of the population of Bengal, of course that is my personal opinion, does not represent accurate figures.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to the answer just given, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government desires to devise any means to get correct figures?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: *Of course, this year* I am considering that matter, and I shall see that as far as possible accurate figures are gathered from some agency.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister just now that almost all the districts of Bengal are deficit districts, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House what did the Government mean to do to save people from starvation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: In order to meet the deficit for the current year Government will try its level best to import rice from the neighbouring provinces as far as possible. Of course, we have not got complete control over the matter and we have got to obtain the sanction of the Central Government and the Government of Bengal will try to do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur, you are not, of course, to expound your policy in reply to a question.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what does he mean by the expression "last harvest"?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: "Last harvest" does not mean actually the last harvest, but the one previous to that which was a bumper year.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: With reference to the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister that Bankura is a deficit district, may I enquire what is the extent of that deficit.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: In Bankura, according to statistics, the total outturn is 35,02,300 maunds and the requisite consumption amounts to 55,16,100 maunds. So practically there is a deficit of 20 lakhs.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iv*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has got any figures to show the total quantity of rice and paddy exported from Bengal up to February, 1943?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course, the year is not closed yet and I must frankly admit that this refers to the Commerce Department and it is not possible for me to give definite figures. If the honourable member puts the question to the Minister in charge of the Commerce Department I hope he will get correct figures.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to the latter part of answer (*b*) where the Hon'ble Minister has stated that there are deficit areas in most districts, even when the whole district is surplus, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in Khulna or in Bakarganj there are deficit areas?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI: Sir, in one district all the lands are not of the same fertility and therefore there may be deficit areas.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is simple, whether there are deficit areas in Khulna or Bakarganj and the answer would be simply "yes" or "no". No explanatory statement is necessary in reply to a question.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: In view of the Hon'ble Minister's reply that there was good crop in Bakarganj last year, will he be pleased to state why there was scarcity of rice in that district?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That was on account of Government purchases in large quantities.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the answer given in (*c*) that exports from one province to another are now controlled by the Government of India, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that Assam paddy used to feed the people of Rangpur, Bogra, Serajganj, Tangail and Manikganj?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, I know that a large number of cultivators from Mymensingh and other neighbouring districts go over to Assam and get lands cultivated there as *bargadars* or occupancy *raiyats* and they live on the rice they produce there.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the answer just now given by the Hon'ble Minister that the scarcity in Barisal was due to Government purchases, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he would see that Government purchases are discontinued in order to save the country from ruination?

Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That is altogether a separate department. I do not think even a Provincial Government can give any definite answer to that question unless the policy is changed.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of order, Sir. Is the Hon'ble Minister entitled to say in regard to a supplementary question that it does not concern his department and that therefore he is unable to answer that question. I want to know, Sir, whether it is a Government on joint responsibility or whether the Ministers are individually responsible?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: We have, it is true, joint responsibility but we have separate responsibility and separate functions also.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: My question was not properly answered, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a point of order raised by Babu Nagendra Nath Sen, and I would like to say something in that connection. Well, Mr. Sen, the fact is that questions have got to be asked of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department concerned and he is to reply to them,

but sometimes it so happens that the questions put involve the jurisdiction of two or three Ministers, and it is therefore desirable, as far as practicable, for the Minister answering the questions to give answers relating to all the departments. But when a supplementary question is asked, it becomes somewhat difficult for the particular Hon'ble Minister to reply to it and then if he says that it is desirable that the question should be put to the Hon'ble Minister in charge there is nothing wrong in it.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, what then is the remedy in that case, when the Hon'ble Minister says that it does not concern his department and when you have also held that it is just up to the Minister answering the question to refer to another Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not for me to say what is the remedy.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he can give the House any information about the quantity of carry-over of paddy and rice from the last crop season to the present crop season?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I would ask for notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, my last question was not properly answered. My question is whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that the paddy from Assam feeds the people of four districts, viz., Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna and Mymensingh. Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of that fact?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already given the answer that you could expect of him.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, the answer was that people from these districts go to Assam and cultivate lands in Assam. But that is not a proper answer to my question.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: My information also is that paddy is generally imported from Assam for the districts of Rangpur, Mymensingh, etc., but I cannot give any definite answer.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: The Hon'ble Minister has been pleased to tell us that shortage in Bakarganj was due to the fact that Government purchased. Will he be pleased to state how much Government purchased?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am sorry, without notice I cannot give the answer.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that this year before the embargo was placed on the Bakarganj district, huge export was made late in the season?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am not in possession of any official record, but from information and personal knowledge I can say that it is so.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the extent of deficit in Mymensingh district?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Production 2 crores 34 lakhs and odd, and requirements 2 crores 57 lakhs and odd; so it comes to 23 lakhs.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: In view of the reply of the Hon'ble Minister that huge exports have been allowed this year from Bakarganj district, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in case Government think fit to raise the embargo they will consider whether Bakarganj remains a surplus district or not?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I cannot answer such a question. It does not concern my department.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a hypothetical question.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that permits are issued to the merchants of deficit areas by the local executive officers for the purchase of paddy and rice from the surplus areas?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: May be. I have got no information about that.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that some such permits were issued to certain merchants of the Jessore district, which he has just now said is a deficit district, for the purchase of rice from the Khulna district which is a surplus district, but they were driven out from there?

Mr. SPEAKER: This question does not arise in view of the previous answer.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That I am unable to reply.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iv*) where the Hon'ble Minister states that the figure regarding the total stock of surplus paddy available for this year is not known, will he please tell the House when he expects to make the figure available to this House?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: In a week or so.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Typists and copyists in the Chittagong Civil Courts.

43. Dr. SANAULLAH: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of typists in the Chittagong Civil Courts, Copying Department;

(*ii*) the number of them that are Muslims;

(*iii*) the average earning of a typist and copyist at—

(1) Sadar, and

(2) Muffassal;

(*iv*) the number of typists and copyists that are overdue for retirement in the Civil Court of Chittagong;

(*v*) the number of Muslim typists that are empanelled in the waiting list of the Civil Court, Chittagong; and

(*vi*) the present number of Muslim typists at Sadar?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*vi*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that some non-Matric copyists have recently been confirmed at Cox's Bazar and Fatickchary?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*)(*i*) 7.

(*ii*) 2.

(*iii*) *Typist*—(1) Rs.67-15 and (2) Rs.66-7.

Copyist—(1) Rs.45-12 and (2) Rs.51-9.

(*iv*) and (*vi*) None.

(*v*) Three Muslims are in the waiting list of typists and copyists. No separate list is maintained for typists.

(*b*) The present position is the result of old appointments.

(*c*) No. In any event the rules do not debar appointment of non-Matric copyists.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Improvement of tanks in several Unions of Contai subdivision.

45. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware that almost all the tanks and ponds of the Unions Nos. 9, 11, 12, 18, 19 of police-station Contai and Nos. 7, 9, 10 of police-station Ramnagar, district Midnapore, have been polluted by the saline flood and have been rendered useless for drinking purposes?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of drawing up a comprehensive scheme for re-excavating sufficient number of Khas Mahal and private tanks before the coming rains by way of Test Relief Work?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of extending the scheme to other saline affected Unions of Contai and Tamluk specially in those places where tube wells are not possible?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) to (*c*) Yes.

Land Mortgage Banks and Co-operative Stores in certain places in Bengal.

46. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing the number and names of—

(*i*) Land Mortgage Banks;

(*ii*) Rural Co-operative Banks; and

(*iii*) Co-operative Stores established since he assumed charge of the portfolio?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of (1) Co-operative Banks, and (2) Stores in the Rajshahi district;

(*ii*) what are the aims of starting Co-operative Stores; and

(*iii*) whether any such Stores in Naogaon and Nator subdivisions of the Rajshahi district have been started?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) 4 out of 9 at Dacca, Burdwan, Rajshahi and Khulna.

(*ii*) About 1,200. Names not readily available. Their collection will involve considerable labour and time which will not be commensurate with the purpose of the question.

(*iii*) Three, namely, Lohajang Free Primary School Teachers Co-operative Stores in Dacca and the Burdwan Co-operative Stores and Saradaganj Co-operative Stores in Burdwan.

(*b*) (*i*) (1) 1,036, (2) 3.

(*ii*) To provide wholesome goods at a reasonable price and fair dealings to customers.

(*iii*) Two in Naogaon and none in Nator.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Price of standard cloth.

***42. Maulvi MD. ABUL FAZL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state the average price per yard of standard cloth proposed to be supplied to the public of Bengal?

(*b*) What process do Government intend to adopt for making standard cloth available to public?

(*c*) When do Government hope to make such cloth available?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The January allotment of 3,000,000 yards, which has not yet been received, has been

priced by the Government of India at annas 8 to annas 10 per yard ex-Mill, according to the width and quality of each piece; freight and handling charges at the several stages will raise the price by about 6 pies a yard.

(*b*) It has been decided in the first instance to confine distribution to major jute districts, which have not profited from the rise in the price of paddy, and to the cyclone-affected areas in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas and the *bustee* areas of Calcutta and Howrah. Distribution will be through dealers already in the trade selected by the District Officers and under arrangements to ensure that only the poorer sections of the population receive the cloth.

(*c*) As soon as the cloth is received.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to answer whether it is not a fact that the Mohini Mills advertised for the supply of standard cloth at Rs. 3-8 a pair—9 yards × 44 inches—and in view of that why is it that the Government of India have put the price of standard cloth at 8 to 10 annas a yard, and what was the fault of the Mohini Mills?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have no information of the Mohini Mills' offer.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*a*) that the January allotment has not yet been received, when can we expect that allotment?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: We have in the meantime received railway receipts for 65 + 172 + 162, *i.e.*, 399 bales: others are expected soon.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the major jute districts in the estimation of the Government for the purpose of supplying standard cloth?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Almost all the districts of East Bengal and some districts of North Bengal too.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: What are the districts?

Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps you know better than the Hon'ble Minister. He is not in charge of the Agriculture Department.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state from which date or month these standard cloths will be available in the market?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As I have already stated, we have got the railway receipts.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: That is not my question. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state from which date or month these standard cloths will be available to the public?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It will be available very soon, because as soon as the consignment reaches us we are making all arrangements for distribution.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House what arrangement the Government proposes to make so as to ensure that the standard cloth is available to the poorer section of the community first?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The District Magistrates have been requested to select retail dealers who will sell this standard cloth under the supervision of Government officials.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: To any and everybody?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Only to the poorer section of the people.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: How will he ensure that?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That will be decided according to the union rate paid and other standards from which it will be judged by Government who is poor and who is rich.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many shops will be opened in each district or in each thana or in each subdivision or in each union board?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That will depend on the amount of cloth that we get. As more consignments will be received, more districts will be taken into consideration. The number of shops in each district will be determined by the Collector.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if sales tax will also be an extra charge, or will it be free from the sales tax?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No sales tax will be charged on this.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the special treatment to the major jute districts is in furtherance of the Government of Bengal's policy to encourage the growing of jute to the detriment of other crops?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the first instance districts other than Midnapore and 24-Parganas and the *bustee* areas of Calcutta and Howrah will be entitled to the benefit of the standard cloth, and if so what is the Government's plan with regard to the districts except those four which I have just now mentioned?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: There are two questions. As regards the first part my answer is that we have not got as yet sufficient number of cloths as the Government of India are not prepared to give us the amount of cloth that we require. Although we shall first confine our activities to the *bustee* areas of Howrah and Calcutta and to Midnapore and 24-Parganas, that is, the flood-affected areas, as soon as we get increased number of consignments we shall extend them to other jute-growing districts.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have got any plan of the distribution of standard cloth after the requirements of the four areas, viz., Midnapore, 24-Parganas and the *bustee* areas of Calcutta and Howrah, have been met?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The only general plan, as I have already stated, is to confine the distribution of standard cloth to poorer sections, and who are the poorer sections and how many of them can be supplied at a particular time is a matter for the District Magistrate to consider.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not his question. You will give preference to these classes no doubt, but what he says is what is the policy—whether after the fulfilment of the needs of those four districts you will distribute or even before that.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Not necessarily. As soon as we get more consignments, we shall certainly extend our distribution fields.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government of India have allotted quotas of this standard cloth to Bengal month by month. If so, for how many months?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Three lakhs of yards have been allotted for January and after that for February and March there is a further allotment of 7 lakhs of yards.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether allotments for two months only have been made up to date or allotments for several more months have been made?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Not yet. Only three months' allotments have been made.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the distress and in view of the discontent prevailing, will the Government be pleased to take the public into their confidence as regards their intention with respect to the distribution of standard cloth at least for six months?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid, that question does not arise.

Control of prices and its effect.

***46. Maulvi AZHAR ALI:** (*a*) Has the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department received any report to the effect that the present system of control of sale and supply of foodstuffs and other commodities of daily use without any control of price, has given birth to a system of profiteering?

(*b*) Is it a fact that poor people of the Province are not getting their daily rations after a hard day's labour for want of sufficient number of controlled shops?

(*c*) If the answers to (*a*) and (*b*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, do the Government propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) The implications of the honourable member's question are not fully understood. If he is referring to abuses that have taken place in the present system of distribution of some commodities through controlled shops, Government are aware of complaints to this effect. They are also aware of the existence of black markets in commodities in respect of which controlled prices were fixed some time ago.

(*b*) No, there are other more fundamental causes.

(*c*) Government have under their active consideration the entire question of the distribution of essential foodstuffs in urban areas for which a special system may have to be evolved.

The appointment of a Distributing Trades Tribunal and a Special Officer for the planning of distribution are preliminary steps towards this end.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the abuses and the existence of black markets in commodities for which controlled prices have been fixed and, if so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what remedies are contemplated for removing these?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The only remedy that Government can have is by taking steps against all sorts of information about such abuses and by prosecuting the offenders and bringing them to book.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the change in the Government's policy regarding control as enunciated a few days ago, does the Hon'ble Minister say that Government sticks to the policy enunciated in answer to starred question No. 46 which was printed long before the change of policy?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government only contemplate the expansion of the policy that has already been undertaken. The action that has been taken up till now is not quite sufficient to meet the requirements and what Government contemplate is expansion in this direction.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the policy of decontrol recently adopted by Government has resulted in rapid rise in the prices of paddy and crops?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: In some places, yes.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that black markets flourished under the very nose and connivance of Government officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Certainly, Sir, there cannot be any connivance of Government officers, but the owners of shops are only third persons and Government have only power of supervision and control.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: If the policy of decontrol has resulted in the rise of prices in certain places, do Government intend to take any steps in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government is watching the situation and expects that after a certain rise which is inevitable by this decontrol policy there will be a diminution in the prices.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, "No, there are other more fundamental causes," will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are those causes and if they are known to Government whether Government are prepared to remove them?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: What Government meant by "fundamental causes" are (1) shortage of supply in relation to the demand, (2) high prices of food-grains caused by numerous factors, and (3) disparity between the rise in prices and the rise in the money income of the poor. These are also factors which contributed to the situation.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Does the Hon'ble Minister know that in nearly all places in Bihar rice has been selling at not more than Rs. 10 and, if so, what are the causes which have led to this abnormal rise in prices in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, we have information that the price of rice in Bihar is lower than that prevailing in Bengal, and we are trying to bring down the price of rice in Bengal by all attempts that are within our power.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government are contemplating import of rice from Bihar to Bengal or any other province?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: We shall be right glad to import rice from Bihar or any other province, but that is a matter which lies in the discretion of the Government of India which is the controlling authority now.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: As it is disclosed in the reply of the Hon'ble Minister that there have been abuses regarding distribution by the control shops, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any steps or any punishment was inflicted upon the owners of those shops by which those abuses were caused?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, whenever there was any complaint or any specific case reported to Government, Government have prosecuted the offenders and also taken other steps against them.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of the shops which have committed such mischief?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: As regards names, I must have notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister, is he aware of the prevalence of rumours that corruption bribery and nepotism have been running very high in this department?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government cannot refute any rumour unless it is particularly brought to their notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether there are any rumours and whether Government have taken any steps?

Mr. SPEAKER: Rumours are rumours.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, I do not base my question upon rumours. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister if Government are aware of these rumours.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government have got any elaborate scheme to check profiteering?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, they have.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: With reference to the last part of answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state when they would adopt such preliminary steps and how long they would take for the planning of distribution that has been mentioned?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No definite time can be given, but this much can be said, that Government are taking all possible steps and they are taking steps as are required under the circumstances. There cannot be any finality about this matter. Steps will be taken as circumstances arise.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With reference to the reply to my question, will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether we can have some light on the scheme that Government are preparing to check profiteering?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The full-fledged scheme that Government wish to adopt is under consideration now and as soon as it is approved by Government as a whole, it will be published.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether there has not been any effect on the price-level of paddy after the publication of the recent communiqué?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That has already been answered.

Ban on the use of cycle-rickshaws in Calcutta and suburbs.

***141. Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware—

(*i*) that the use of cycle-rickshaws in the areas of Calcutta and its suburbs has been banned;

(*ii*) that taxi and bus services have been curtailed owing to rationing of petrol and other causes; and

(*iii*) that public has been put to inconveniences due to curtailment of public-conveyance services?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of—

(*i*) withdrawing the ban on cycle-rickshaws; and

(*ii*) taking any other steps in the matter?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*i*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of permitting cycle-rickshaws for private use?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) This is incidental to the situation created by war emergency.

(*b*) and (*c*) No.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what objection is there to allow cycle-rickshaws to ply in the streets of Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The objection is that the use of cycle-rickshaws at the present time in consequence of the congestion of traffic is likely to lead to incidents.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if there has not been a great difference in the situation between the point of time when cycle-rickshaws were banned and the present time? There is no such pressure of traffic now.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a question of opinion.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if cycle-rickshaws are considered more dangerous than ordinary rickshaws?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, cycle-rickshaws are considered more dangerous than ordinary rickshaws.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state why cycle-rickshaws are banned in Calcutta alone when they are not banned in any other district headquarters?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Because all the rickshaws could not be banned and cycle-rickshaws are comparatively more dangerous. That is why they have been banned.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Are they dangerous to the pedestrians or to those travelling in them?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Dangerous to people all round.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether any expert medical opinion was taken about the health of the ordinary rickshaw-pullers and that of the cycle-rickshaw drivers?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Sir, I think it arises because of the difference between cycle-rickshaws and ordinary rickshaws. Rickshaw-pullers suffer more physically than those who drive cycle-rickshaws——

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean to say that those who pull rickshaws not on cycle but on foot have to undergo harder labour and consequently it tells upon their health.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the subject-matter of this question. So, that question does not arise

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the rationing in petrol, will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether there has not been less traffic of motor cars and buses in the year 1942 than it was in the year 1941?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So far as private motor cars and taxis are concerned, there may have been a diminution, but there has been a tremendous rise in military motor transport and other conveyances. Streets are full nowadays.

Family allowances for security prisoners.

***142. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether many security

prisoners or their wives have applied to the Government for family allowances?

(*b*) If the answer to clause (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any allowances have been granted to such applicants?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the names of the security prisoners; and

(*ii*) the amount of monthly allowances granted to each?

(*d*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting them family allowances during the present war situation?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of any allowances being granted to the security prisoners by other Provincial Governments?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) (*i*) The time and labour involved in the preparation of such a list will be disproportionate and I am not prepared to furnish it. If the honourable member wishes to know the details of any particular case I shall be glad to supply them after due notice.

(*ii*) The amount given ranges from Rs.6 to Rs.75 per month.

(*d*) Does not arise.

(*e*) I have no information.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government contemplate granting dearness allowance to the security prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think there was lengthy cross-examination on the same question some other day.

Police search in office of Bengali monthly (Jayasree).

***143. Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether the office of the Editor and Proprietor of the Bengali Monthly Journal *Jayasree* at 194B, Rash Behari Avenue, Calcutta, was searched by the police on the 1st of May and 2nd June, 1942?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what articles, if any, were seized by the Police in course of the searching?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the security deposit of *Jayasree* has been forfeited?

(*d*) If so, do the Government contemplate to refund the security deposit of *Jayasree*?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes on the 1st May, 1942, but not on the 2nd June, 1942.

(*b*) A list of articles seized is laid on the Library Table.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) No.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the amount of security deposit of the *Jayasree* that has been forfeited?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The papers now in my hand do not show it because it is not relevant to the question put. I can give the information if I get notice.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: What was the gist of the contents for which this forfeiture was made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is impossible for me to say it unless I get notice.

Air raids in Bengal.

***144. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Civil Defence Co-ordination) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many times Calcutta, Chittagong and Feni have been raided by Japanese aircraft; and

(*ii*) whether any other places in Bengal have been bombed by the enemy raiders?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of the places bombed?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of men (1) killed and (2) injured as the result of bombing raids in each place on each time;

(*ii*) the extent of destruction caused by the enemy bombers;

(*iii*) whether any steps have been taken to give the wounded persons immediate medical aid after bombing?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) I regret that on grounds of public security it is not possible to disclose the information.

(*iii*) Yes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether it would not be in the public interest to disclose the actual number of raids in the different parts of Bengal so that the public might have confidence in the information supplied by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, the military authorities think otherwise.

Air Raid casualties.

***145. Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Defence) Department be pleased to state the number of men killed due to air raids up to the 31st January, 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I regret that on grounds of public security the information cannot be disclosed.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplates to give any compensation to the injured or to the members of the families of the killed?

The Hon'ble Mr A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the matter is not at any rate before the consideration of Government.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any scheme of Government under which payment is made to persons who are injured or killed in air-raids?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not at the present moment in a position to answer the question because it does not strictly arise out of the question put. But if the information is required, I can furnish it later.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that there is a war injury scheme under the War Risks Insurance Fund under which persons injured or killed are compensated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir; that is true.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the payment of compensation to persons killed or injured is in the hand of the Central Government or of the Provincial Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a question to which I cannot answer either in the affirmative or in the negative.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: In view of the answer just now given to the question of Mr. Stark, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of giving compensation to persons injured and also to the members of families of persons killed in air-raids?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, in suitable cases it is done.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any compensation has been paid to the persons killed during the recent bombing in Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I ask for notice.

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Supply of rations to prisoners in jail.

44. Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that for some time past *atta* is not being regularly supplied for rations of prisoners including security prisoners;

(*ii*) that those who are accustomed to take *atta* only as their staple food in both their principal meals have practically to go without any diet; and

(*iii*) that the *atta* supplied to the jails for the consumption of prisoners is adulterated and unfit for human consumption?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Due to the present abnormal conditions there was some difficulty in the regular supply of *atta* to the prisoners, but the difficulty has since been got over.

(*ii*) and (*iii*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the circumstances which led to the easing of the difficulty which was experienced as regards the supply of *atta* to jail prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That I cannot say, but possibly by reason of the recent supply of wheat.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the supply was received and from what source?

Mr. SPEAKER: These are matters of details, Mr. Sen, which the Hon'ble Minister cannot be expected perhaps to furnish at short notice.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Scarcity at Rangpur due to failure of crops.

***47. Mr. KSHETRA NATH SINGHA.** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that paddy (*aman*) crop of the district of Rangpur suffered greatly for want of rain;

(*ii*) that there are already signs of acute scarcity in some parts such as Nilphamari, Kurigram and Gaibandha subdivisions;

(*iii*) that Rangpur is a deficit district for defective harvest;

(*iv*) that Government issued a communique to prohibit export of paddy and rice from Rajshahi Division;

(*v*) that the Collector of Rangpur is trying to purchase one lakh maunds of rice from the district; and

(*vi*) that mills in the Division of Rajshahi are sending away rice to the outside districts?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*v*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government intend to stop the purchase from Rangpur district in future?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Yes, there was heavy damage of *aman* crop due to drought in some area of the district.

(*ii*) Signs of scarcity are visible in some parts of the Nilphamari subdivision only.

(*iii*) Yes, according to the agricultural statistics for the present year.

(*iv*) Yes.

(*v*) No. Only 25,000 maunds.

(*vi*) Yes, within the Rajshahi Division and with permit outside the Rajshahi Division.

(*b*) Government will give due consideration to this matter.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*v*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the District Magistrate purchased rice of his own initiative or at the behest of Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Certainly at the behest of Government?

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the rice bought in the district was stocked in the district or removed from the district?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Ahmed Hosain, after putting your question to the Hon'ble Minister, you should not remain standing but should resume your seat.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has come to know of acute scarcity in any other subdivision of the district?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No, Sir.

Export of paddy and rice from Bengal.

***60. Maulvi MD. ABUL FAZL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state how many maunds of (1) paddy and (2) rice have been exported outside Bengal from the 1st January, 1942, up to the date of reply of this question?

(*b*) What steps, if any, have been taken by Government to prevent export of rice and paddy from the Province during that time?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table. Paddy figures have not been shown separately but have been reduced to their rice equivalents.

(*b*) The export of paddy and rice from the Province has been prohibited since the 1st July, 1942, except under permits issued by the Chief Controller of Prices and the Director of Civil Supplies.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 60.

EXPORT OF RICE FROM BENGAL.

	From January to July, 1942.	From August to November, 1942.	From December, 1942, to January, 1943.	Total.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
(*a*) By rail and river	2·11 lakh	0·07 lakh (excluding October and November figures which are not available).	Not available ..	2·18 lakh
(*b*) Coastal	0·02 ,,	Nil	Not available ..	0·02 ,,
(*c*) Abroad ..	0·48 ,,	0·06 lakh	Over 0·10 lakh ..	0·64 ,,
Total	2·61 lakh	0·13 lakh	0·1 lakh ..	2·84 lakh.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a huge quantity of rice has been exported during the period from October, 1942, to January, 1943, of which no figure has been furnished?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, I cannot say as I have not got the figures.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, except under permits issued by the Chief Controller of Prices, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the quantity of paddy and rice covered by these terms under the cover of which it has been permissible to export paddy and rice from Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The permits that are indicated here were not issued at a time, but were perhaps issued from time to time. If the information is specifically required, I must ask for notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons why even after feeling the acute shortage of rice in the province Government allowed ten thousand tons of rice to be exported outside Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have not mentioned ten thousand tons in my reply, Sir.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, in the column from December, 1942, to January, 1943, in the statement appended to the answer, it is mentioned that over ten thousand tons of rice were exported from Bengal.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The only reason that I can infer is that if we refuse to supply any rice to other provinces asked for by the Government of India, the Government of India can similarly refuse to supply to us the other commodities which we require.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I think it does not concern the other provinces for it went abroad

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It covers all that we have to send out from Bengal and that we have to do or we have to depend on the Government of India for our other supplies.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Was the export of rice to Ceylon made under the direction of the Government of India or the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I cannot answer off-hand, for I shall have to ascertain the fact

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to the figures from December, 1942, to January, 1943, under the head "Abroad", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any quantity out of this sum was exported to Ceylon?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Might have been, but I do not know.

Message from the Bengal Legislative Council.

The Secretary then read the following message:—

"That the concurrence of the Bengal Legislative Assembly be asked to the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council at its meeting held on the 8th March, 1943."

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

7—Land Revenue.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, I move that a sum of Rs. 30,27,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue."

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by a sum of Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to bring under cultivation culturable wastes under *khas mahal* as well as elsewhere.

Sir, as you may be aware, there is a great deal of demand at the present moment for increasing the number of acreage under cultivation in the province. But it is surprising to find that under the *khas mahal* large tracts are lying fallow—tracts which are not only culturable but which can produce very good crop. In my district of Murshidabad I have found that on both sides of the river Bhagirathi, which is largely declining, large tracts are lying fallow because the Irrigation Department experts feel that nothing should be grown on the banks of the river. As a matter of fact things are grown and vegetation is found in plenty, but not vegetation of the type that can be used either for human food or for animal feeding. I could have understood the object of keeping some land fallow to allow free flow of water, but, Sir, you will find invariably this area overgrown with shrubs of various descriptions which do not allow water to flow as freely as the Irrigation Department might be conceiving. Not only that. We have found that in certain parts land that comes over to the *khas mahal* for the tenant's inability to pay rent is not resettled quickly or with expedition as is attempted under private landholders. The *khas mahal* has got a peculiar system which prevents easy and quick resettlement of land. They have systems of reporting to the highest authorities before the managers in the local area can immediately proceed with the resettlement, and probably it was at one time necessary with a view to prevent abuses in the name of resettlement, but surely the time has come to examine these meticulous rules and find out if some improvement could not be effected.

Sir, my cut motion is not so much with the object of censuring Government as to invite the attention of Government to certain directions in which the productive capacity of land under *khas mahal* may be improved. Sir, for some years past some members of the public in the town of Berhampore have been approaching the District Collector for enabling them to grow some foodcrops in a large tract of land in the riverbed in the town, which usually gets inundated through flood during the rainy season but which is then left over fallow though culturable. But, Sir, the Collector has found himself helpless in the matter, and I would be very much grateful if the Hon'ble Minister in charge can see his way to make such land available particularly in a year like this, when we are all pressing for growing more food.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by a sum of Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about the recommendations of the Flood Commission.

The recommendations of the Floud Commission have been before us and before the country at large since the 21st March, 1940, but unfortunately nothing has been done in the light of the recommendations as yet. Before the report was published, we were given hope by the Hon'ble Chief Minister that as soon as the report would be published something substantial would undoubtedly be done for the good of the people. But unfortunately when the report saw the light of day that hope was not implemented. Then, Sir, the Ministry was dissolved, and the new Progressive Ministry, or rather the so-called Progressive Ministry, came into power, and I must frankly confess here that although I belong to the Opposition, I cherish in my heart of hearts that something substantial must be done during the régimé of the Progressive Ministers, but unfortunately we have been disappointed.

Then, Sir, finding himself in a very awkward position for reasons better known to the people, the Hon'ble Chief Minister the other day came out with a statement telling the people that he is just now ready to do something substantial to revolutionise the land laws of Bengal and to do something substantial for the people. But, Sir, I must say that that hope also is a colossal hoax.

Now I should like to come directly to the recommendations. If we go through the recommendations we see that there are 53 different items of recommendations of the Commission, the first of which runs thus: "The majority of the Commission has reached the conclusion that whatever may have been the justification for the Permanent Settlement in 1793 it is no longer suitable to the conditions of the present time. The present system should be replaced by one which will bring the actual cultivators into the position of tenants holding directly under the Government by acquiring the interests of all classes of rent-receivers." Then, Sir, if we look to page 17 of the report we see that "the zemindars in Bengal never had an absolute right of property in the soil; nor was it intended to give them such rights by the Permanent Settlement." Again, if we look to page 41 we see that "the majority of the members are definitely of opinion that no other solution than State acquisition will be adequate to remedy the defects of the present land system." It is not possible for me within so short a time as five minutes to go into details of this report which is very interesting and illuminating, but if we look to pages 74 and 75 we see that pressure of population in this province has rendered subdivision of holdings, fragmentation of holdings and uneconomic holdings criminally damaging to our province adding thereby to the untold miseries of the people in the countryside to a great extent.

All these show that the land of the province must be nationalised. Nationalisation of the land is a necessity at the present moment, and for that the zemindari system must be done away with and proper legislation must be made in its place in the light of the recommendations of the Commission. This is item No. 1.

If this is found to be difficult for Government for reasons better known to them, then I must say that there are other innocent recommendations in the report such as acquisition of royalties from mines, of superior rights in

khas mahals, that all fishery rights should be acquired, the imposition of an agricultural income-tax and recommendations Nos. 17 to 23 regarding the possibility of extending cultivation of valuable crops can be given effect to at once——

(At this stage the honourable member reached his time-limit but was allowed one minute more.)

These recommendations can be given effect to in spite of giving effect to item No. 1.

Sir, for this all-important matter much depends on the Hon'ble Chief Minister—he being the leader of the party in power and also the Leader of the House, but, I am afraid, at the present moment he is unable to do that because he is now under the clutches of a certain section of people who are determined to ruin and crush him politically though not financially. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the necessity of reducing rent by 50 per cent. of the lands lying uncultivated in the inundated areas of different subdivisions of the district of Midnapore.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, এই বঙ্গদেশে প্রাদেশিক স্বায়ত্তশাসন প্রবর্ত্তনের প্রথম হ'তেই এই পরিষদ গৃহ ভিন্ন ভিন্ন বক্তার উচ্চ কণ্ঠধ্বনিতে এই বলে মুখরিত হচ্ছে যে যাহারা বঙ্গদেশের এবং বাঙ্গালী জাতির মেরুদণ্ডস্বরূপ সেই হতভাগ্য কৃষককুলকে বাঁচাতে হবে, তাদের অনসনক্লিষ্ট মলিন মুখের দিকে তাকাতে হবে এবং ছিনিয়ে আনতে হবে তাদের সেই দুর্দ্দশা রাক্ষসীর কবল থেকে। বছরের পর বছর চ'লে যাচ্ছে কিন্তু হয়নি এখনও তাদের কোন প্রতীকার। কৃষি-খাতক আইন, বঙ্গীয় মহাজন আইন, বঙ্গীয় প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন প্রভৃতি যাহা কিছু তাহাদের মঙ্গলকল্পে প্রবর্ত্তিত বা সংশোধিত হ'য়েছে তাতে তাদের কষ্টমোচন হওয়া দূরে থাকুক, তাদের দুঃখভাব দিনের পর দিন আরও দুঃসহ হয়ে উঠছে। জমিজমার উপবই নির্ভর করে তাদের জীবনধারণ, তাদের সুখস্বাচ্ছন্দ্য ও তাদের আশাভরসা। যে সকল জমিজমা তাদের চাষ-আবাদের জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় সেইগুলি কি অবস্থায় আছে বা কিরূপ অসুবিধায় পড়ে কৃষককুল সেই সমস্ত জমিজমা হইতে কোন উপকার পাইতেছে না তদ্বিষয়ে উপস্থিত গভর্ণমেণ্ট কর্ত্তৃক যে তদন্ত কমিটি (Floud Commission) কোরেছিলেন তার report মত কার্য্য করবার সুযোগ যদি তাঁরা না নিয়ে থাকেন তবে কৃষকগণ অচিরে ধরাপৃষ্ঠ হতে লুপ্ত হয়ে যাবে। ঝঞ্ঝাবাত, জলপ্লাবন, নৈসর্গিক অত্যাচারের পীড়নও তাদের উপর ভীষণ হতে ভীষণতর হ'তে চলেছে। বন্যার প্রকোপে পোড়ে কত শত একর জমি যে অকর্ম্মণ্য হয়ে উঠেছে তার ইয়ত্তা নাই। তাহার উপর ঐ সকল জমির খাজনার তাড়না খুব বেশী। মেদিনীপুর জেলার অন্তর্গত ঘাটাল সাবডিভিসনের abundant areaর মধ্যে যে কত শত বিঘা জমি অনাবাদি হয়ে রয়েছে তাহা বর্ণনাতীত। বর্ষা আরম্ভ হ'বার পর হ'তেই ঐ সকল কৃষিক্ষেত্র প্রতি বৎসর ৫।৬ বার ক'রে বন্যার জলে ডুবে যায়। যা কিছু ফসল চাষ করতে প্রয়াস পায় তার সবটুকুই পোচে-হেজে ধ্বংসস্তূপে পরিণত হয়। চাষাদের স্বভাবজাত চাষাবাদ করবার যে প্রয়াস তারা প্রতি বছর পায় তাহার ফলে তারা ক্রমশঃ নিঃস্ব হয়ে পড়ছে। দিতে হয় তাদের জমিদারকে

প্রচুর খাজনা। ভুস্বামী দেখায় না তাদের এতটুকু দয়া। থালা, বাটি-বাটী, চাষের গরুমহিষ তাদের কর্ত্তে হয় বিক্রি। ঘরবাড়ী, স্থাবর অস্থাবর সম্পত্তি শেষ যেটুকু থাকে দিতে হয় তাই তাদের হাতে তুলে।

তাই বলি এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি দেশের মঙ্গল করবার এতটুকু কল্পনা নিয়ে থাকেন তবে তাঁদের উচিত এই সকল বন্যা প্লাবিত জমিজমার খাজনার হার শতকরা ৫০ ভাগ কমিয়ে দেবার সত্বর ব্যবস্থা করা। উক্ত বিষয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের তথা মাননীয় মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর উপেক্ষা করা কোন মতেই সমীচীন হবে না। এই ব'লে আমি আমার Cut motionএর বক্তব্য শেষ করলাম।

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to bring a legislation to prevent agricultural lands from passing into the hands of the non-agriculturists. Motion No. 10 which also stands in my name and which I am not moving is to the effect that the demand be reduced by Rs. 100 to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to give effect to the Land Revenue Commission.

In moving the cut motion, Sir, I support all the motions that have been moved today by my friends under this head. In doing so I crave your indulgence to speak on the subject generally. Looking at the receipt side we find that the expected income for the coming year 1943-44 is Rs. 3,62,90,000. This income on the receipt side under the head "7—Land Revenue" can be enhanced to a sufficiently greater amount by some crores of rupees by adopting the following amongst other methods:—(1) by abolishing Permanent Settlement and replacing *raiyatari* system in its place according to which no intermediary would remain there between the Government on the one hand and the actual tillers of the soil on the other which the Land Revenue Commission recommends. A thorough amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act should be made accordingly and a fresh legislation is to be made, if required; (2) all fallow but culturable lands in all the districts in the province should be surveyed and given in settlement with the zemindars, particularly with the landless labourers without any *nazar;* (3) the fisheries which were not given in settlement with the private landlords at any time but of which they are enjoying the usufruct from long before—those fisheries should be brought under Government control; and (4) agricultural loans in cash or in kind, particularly the distribution of improved type of seeds at large scale on loan system by flourishing the country would directly or indirectly fetch money to the public exchequer.

Now, Sir, looking from a different angle of vision we have seen that the expected income in the coming year is more by 10½ lakhs than that of the revised estimate of Rs. 3,52½ lakhs in 1942-43. How can it be expected that Rs. 10½ lakhs more would be realised under this head over Rs. 3,52½ lakhs while the general atmosphere of the country has been awfully bad due to the war situation, due to the total and some where partial devastation of crops by flood, drought and abnormal rise of prices of foodstuffs and other daily

necessaries of life? However, Sir, here in this connection I pause and draw the attention of the Government to the following points for remedies:—

Firstly, unnecessary hardship and harassment must not be inflicted upon the *raiyats* and tenants for the realisation of rents under the Government estates and *khas mahals* in the present critical circumstances and not only that but also before the very eyes of the Government it is to see that the landlords cannot do so. Far from doing that, I hope I echo the voice of the House when I propose that in connection with the affected areas the rents to be realised from the *raiyats* as well as the revenue to be collected from the private zamindars and *talukdars* should be suspended and excused for one year in consideration of the gravity of the situation. The decrees and pending money suits are to be stayed, instalments of Debt Settlement Boards are to be shifted to one year later and certificate cases are to be cancelled. Secondly, the most oppressive system of realising rents for the diluviated lands must be stopped once for all. Sir, it is a most pathetic scene to see that in spite of some definite statutory provision in law rents are still being realised not only by private landlords but by Government also from the dumb millions for the periods long before which the lands were diluviated.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Mirza, your time is up. However, I would allow you one minute more to finish.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ. Sir, Bengal is intersected by rivers like the Jumna, the Padma, the Meghna, the Tista, and so on.

Sir, looking at the Jumna we find that the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bakarganj, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur by the side of which the Jumna, its branches and sub-branches pass through, have not been less affected. I am definite that every year many cases are filed for the arrears of rents for holdings totally or partially diluviated. My definite suggestion therefore is that in every riverain subdivision a surveyor or *kanungo* be kept if there is none to report annually to the Collector after proper enquiry or survey of every *mouja* diluviated partly or wholly.

Now, Sir, coming to the next point, a legislation has been urgent to make to prevent agricultural lands from passing out of the hands of the agriculturists into those of the non-agriculturists. If such a healthy and salutary measure be not adopted by the ruling power of the province in right earnest in the near future, I can foretell that this may lead to a chaotic revolution in future. The sale deeds in the Registration Offices, the auction sales in the Civil Courts and Certificate Offices have been increased by an overwhelming number per annum and the lands are passing out of the hands of the agriculturists converting them into the status of landless labourers by millions every month. Such a measure has been long overdue in Bengal as it was done long ago by the Punjab Government. But, unfortunately,

I am under the painful necessity to say that the Government of Bengal has totally failed so long to adopt any such healthy measure.

(At this stage the member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on summary procedure against under-*raiyats* under section 48C of the Bengal Tenancy Act. The number and importance of tenants holding under-*raiyats* directly or indirectly can by no means be minimised. They have been described as under-*raiyats* in the Tenancy Act: they are more properly known as *korfa* tenants. The under-*raiyati* settlement has been a feature of the province from time immemorial and the rights of these under-*raiyats* were certainly considered as good and strong as that of the *raiyats* even in earlier part of the 19th century. As a matter of fact, the legal distinction made in the Tenancy Act was not so much understood or recognised by the people.

The amending Bengal Tenancy Act of 1928 provided that under-*raiyats* without right of occupancy including those in possession for a continuous period of 12 years or having a homestead in the land, and those who have been admitted in a document by their landlord to have permanent and heritable rights are liable to ejectment summarily under section 48C which includes failure to pay arrears of rent and for not agreeing to pay enhanced rent under section 48D. The effect has been disastrous for this class of poor and miserable tenants who as a class are the actual cultivators of the soil.

Sir, on the recommendation of the Settlement authorities most of the under-*raiyats* of your district—I mean Jessore—were granted occupancy rights, but, Sir, the case was otherwise in the district of Mymensingh. In Pargana Patiladaha in Mymensingh the under-*raiyats* or *korfa* tenants without right of occupancy will be about 60 per cent. of the total number of actual cultivators. These under-*raiyats* hold their lands under big *jotedars* of which my friend Maulvi Abdul Jabbar Palwan of the Progressive Coalition Party is one. I expected that he would bear me out in today's discussion before the House, but I am sorry to find that he is conveniently absent today. It is an irony of fate that after his somersault from the Muslim League to the Krishak Proja Party he appears to have forgotten all about the miseries of the enormous number of *korfa* tenants of his constituency.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: On a point of order, Sir. Is the honourable member entitled to fling any aspersion against a particular member of this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think any reflection has been made in that way.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Now, Sir, these under-*raiyats* pay exorbitant rate of rent to their immediate landlords, the big *raiyats*, most of whom were

middle class tenure-holders before the settlement operations and are now popularly known as *jotedars*. Some of these *jotedars* with *raiyats'* interest have holdings of about 1,000 *bighas* of land sublet to under-*raiyats* immediately under them. They have been in possession of their lands for generations and their rents had to be realised by regular civil suits and their property had to be put to sale in execution of those decrees. After the amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1928, their immediate landlords can file ejectment suits for arrears of rents under section 48C(*a*) on payment of court fees on one year's rent only and they are ejected from their holdings summarily if they fail to pay the rent so decreed, say within 15 days or one month of the date of decree as may be determined by the Court. Sir, they are also liable to be ejected if they do not agree to pay the enhanced rent determined by Court under section 48D. According to this section one's rent may be enhanced up to one-third of the value of the average estimated produce for the decennial period preceding the institution of the suit. From my own experiences as a legal practitioner, I know of cases where rent was enhanced from Rs. 4 to Rs. 16 per *bigha* under this section. Sir, these unfortunate tillers of the soil can hardly manage to procure two square meals a day even by extra labour over and above paying their heavy rate of rent. With the abnormal increase in the prices of foodstuffs in these days their miseries have gone beyond limit. In the circumstances the summary procedure of realising rent on point of ejectment bullet as provided in the Act has given them a death blow. As a result they are gradually turning homeless and landless hired labourers. If the Government desire to save them from catastrophe they must come forward with some amending Tenancy legislation immediately so that the tenants may not have to part with their hearth and home which they hold so dear and which they have been enjoying for generations.

Sir, I will not accuse the Ministry alone for their apathy and indifference towards this class of tenants in Bengal. I would make the whole party supporting the Ministry equally responsible. It is not the Ministers' Government alone, it is the Government of the party behind the Ministers.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, I want two minutes more.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot give you two minutes. Just try to finish in a minute.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: So far as the Ministry is concerned, they have neither the mind nor the time to do anything for the poor. Their only concern is how to keep themselves in office. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister has to be busy in examining and redrafting the languages of his utterances in the House to suit the taste of the Congress benches at any cost. No price is too much for his office. He knows he still holds his job on account of the shelter provided for him by the baffle walls of the Congress benches sitting on his right and left, and, if I am permitted to use the language of the Secretary of the Progressive Party, "the protected wings" of the vested

interests of Hindu Nationalists sitting in his front. Let him thrive and prosper under their generous guidance and benevolent protection. I do not grudge. But I want to say a few words to my friends opposite who support the Ministry. They must remember that the day of reckoning is coming and they will have to share responsibilities for the acts and omissions of their Ministers.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about non-observance of the Bengal Services Recruitment (Communal Ratio) Rules, 1940, in the Department of Court of Wards in the matter of the appointments for the management of the estates.

Sir, by this motion I desire not so much to censure the Government as to draw the attention of the House and that of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department to the fact that all the sections of the people have not been receiving justice in the matter of appointments in the Department. Sir, so far as these appointments are concerned some sections have been totally neglected, some have received very little consideration while others have got them in overwhelming number. The Court of Wards Department of the Government nowadays is a very big concern. Almost all the big estates of the province, specially those of North Bengal, have been thrown under the management of the Court. Every district in the province has got some establishment, big or small, for the management of the Wards' Estates and there a big number of people have been serving and earning their livelihood. Sir, the Scheduled Castes have got little or no place there. Sir, I can say without any fear of contradiction that no Scheduled Caste has ever been there as an executive in the department. Not to speak of any executive officer, Sir, I doubt whether any Scheduled Caste was taken as a petty *tahsildar* drawing Rs. 30 or so a month.

During last session a question with regard to the appointment of the Wards' Estate in the district of Rajshahi came before the House and in reply to which it was disclosed that not a single Scheduled Caste was appointed there, while few Muslims were. It is not the case only with Rajshahi district, but the Scheduled Castes have been dealt with in the same manner in every district. Sir, for the conducting of the legal business of the Wards' Estates many pleaders have been appointed in the districts and subdivisions. But I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge whether he can give any instance of the appointment of any Scheduled Caste pleaders for the purpose. I am sure the Hon'ble Minister is unable. No such appointment has yet been in existence.

Sir, such is the position of the Scheduled Castes with regard to the services under the Wards' Estate Department and that was brought to the notice of the authority. The matter came before the House more than once.

The Hon'ble Minister in charge showed his promptness in assuring us that the matter would be favourably considered. But no attempt is found to have been made for their translation into action.

Today also I may be given assurances of the former type. The Hon'ble Minister may make sympathetic statement. But, Sir, it is not a question of sympathetic treatment. I claim these things as a matter of right. We want justice and fair play, but not any sympathy or kindness.

Sir, justice cannot be expected from the appointing authority unless there be binding rules upon them. Unless the Communal Ratio Rules are extended to those appointments the poor sections of the people cannot expect justice.

Maharajadhiraja Bahadur UDAY CHAND MAHTAB, of Burdwan: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to say a few words with regard to the Land Revenue Commission Report which is vital to rural Bengal, in fact to every person who has any concern with land. The number of cut motions itself shows how eager many honourable members of both the Houses of Legislature are to give effect to the recommendations of the Floud Report without considering the suitability of the time or circumstances in which we are living today. Sir, we are also aware of the fate of a resolution on the subject recently moved in the Upper House and we also know the assurances given on that occasion by the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister.

Sir, I should have thought that at a time like this when we have the enemy almost on the threshold of our province, when we are faced with the problem of acute shortage of foodstuffs, when in every way our very existence is becoming more difficult day by day due to the imposition of fresh taxation to meet the demands for the successful prosecution of the war, matters like the acceptance of the recommendations of the Floud Commission Report, I am sure, could have waited for better times. I do not know what the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister will say at the conclusion of all the speeches that would be made on the floor of the House this evening, but I am afraid that it would be extremely difficult for the Revenue Department to immediately take up a matter of such magnitude and to cope with the drastic changes that would be necessary in case the acceptance of the majority report were acceptable to Government. Apart from the huge financial aspect of the whole thing it would take, I am sure, several years for the Government to take up the matter of looking into the assets and liabilities of each individual landlord before they could recommend what compensation should be given to him. Moreover I think, Sir, this is the time when it should be our duty as legislators not only to legislate for the successful termination of the war, but to see that our less fortunate brethren do not die of starvation due to the exhorbitant and abnormal rise in the prices of commodities. I am not for a moment suggesting that we should preserve the Floud Commission Report as a relic in the Museum, nor would I say that the majority of landlords are afraid to face the consequences, if any, by the consideration of this report. I would only like to say that this is a matter which could safely wait for better times.

Unfortunately, the friendly feelings which existed between the landlords and the tenants has recently been less cordial due to various reasons in many

places, not only due to lack of consideration on the part of some landlords, but very much more due to adverse propaganda in the matter.

Sir, if the tenants' economic problem has not been solved but on the contrary has grown more acute today, in spite of the expropriatory legislations against the landlords from 1885 onwards, how can you expect to solve the problem of rural Bengal by giving effect to the recommendations of the majority of the Floud Commission? Over and above the majority members themselves in their report, and subsequently Mr. Gurner in his note, have clearly shown the huge financial stake and the number of years required for such a measure. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of the province whose bonâ fides as a sincere worker for the tenants' cause is undisputable and the successive Ministers in charge of Revenue have also explained in both Houses of the Legislature, admitting the contention of the majority members of the Floud Commission and of Mr. Gurner's note on the difficulties of State purchase. Sir, is this the proper time to give effect to those recommendations of the Floud Commission? Should it be done so hastily? You all know that it took about 15 years before 1793 to settle whether the Permanent Settlement should be granted or not; still the Act of 1793 has been imputed by all the tenants' representatives as a hasty legislation. Assuming even for the sake of argument that the Act of 1793 was a hasty legislation and its effects ruinous to the country, would it not be a more hasty legislation if you want to do away with the Permanent Settlement at a stroke of the pen and specially in this most critical period of war and the problem of most acute food shortage ahead? I appeal to you and through you to the members of the House to give your considered opinion in the matter and to try and give effect to the recommendations at a more propitious time.

If by the abolition of the Permanent Settlement we can save the people of our province from the threatening catastrophe of food shortage and impending acute distress, I can assure you the landlords would not lag behind anybody to come forward and sacrifice everything within their power to save rural Bengal and specially the lower middle classes, the tenants and labourers. Can this problem be solved by the abolition of the Permanent Settlement? When the per capita cultivated land available for the rural populace according to the Floud Commission as per census figure of 1931 is only ·87 acre and the subsequent pressure of increased population is further decreasing the per capita acreage, how will the abolition of the Permanent Settlement increase the per capita acreage?

Then again, Sir, the shrinkage of areas under cultivation, specially in Western Bengal, decreased due to the bad embankment policy of the Government and the want of irrigation facilities has already done us enough harm. I do not know whether the abolition of the Permanent Settlement will solve this problem as well. The want of proper irrigation facilities, the demand for the clearance of silted rivers and water courses for which there has been a consistent cry in this House from the representatives of all parts of Bengal for many years is a matter of great shame, and I think when Mr. Suhrawardy —I do not see him in the House—was in charge of the revenues of this province, he said that it was not possible to tackle this problem due to the

financial difficulties the Government was then in. Will the abolition of the Permanent Settlement just at this moment help the country on this score in any way?

Sir, the time at my disposal is short, and I need not dilate on all the aspects which the Commission think to be the reasons for the miserable economic condition of the rural population, though a careful reading of the whole report would clearly show that the Permanent Settlement or the landlords could not be blamed for this condition. Therefore, Sir, I would like to say that any hasty conclusions would not help in the matter. For instance, I cite the statement in the Press of our Chief Minister, who has devoted his whole life to the cause of the rural populace, during the last prorogation of the Chamber. I believe this statement was made by him due to pressure from outside, and we find that he has suggested 1/6th of the gross produce as rent for the tenants which means an increment of the tenants' rent by a hundred per cent. according to the report. I know, Sir, Mr. Fazlul Huq never meant what he stated, but this was due to hasty action and public pressure. I appeal to you, therefore, for the interests of those very tenants and peasants not to be too hasty on such a vital matter. We doubt not your sincerity of purpose for the cause you have taken for the tenants and peasants. We appeal to you only not to be overanxious in the matter which may spoil the future of the tenants.

Sir, would it not be a greater service to our people at the present time to try to solve the food problem than the abolition of the Permanent Settlement or calling a conference or committee as suggested by the Hon'ble Revenue Minister for giving effect to the Floud Report? If in the near future when we are relieved of our present strain, may I suggest for your kind consideration whether it would not be judicious to set up a tribunal instead of a committee or a conference? But let us make it unequivocally clear before the House that if you insist on a conference, we would not oppose it; but what we would insist on is that the conference should be composed of an unbiassed impartial body without any consideration of caste, creed or any party politics. Neither shall we oppose the abolition of the Permanent Settlement provided that it is not taken up till the termination of the war and the principle of compensation be uniform and the same in all cases whether for the landlords or the tenants by an impartial tribunal composed of the highest integrity and efficiency——

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed to continue for two minutes more.)

Sir, I have taken much of the time of the House. I do not want to appear obstructive in any way. What I want to point out to you and through you to the Chief Minister and the Revenue Minister is this, that we do not think this a proper time to make hasty changes in a system which has taken years to grow up. Every right-thinking landlord likes to see his tenants prosper, and if at the present moment Government were to introduce any measure for the betterment of the tenants in all parts of Bengal where they are suffering due to heavy rents or anything similar, I am sure we would not object to that. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Mr. J. A. POWELL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to take up the time of the House by analysing the Report of the Land Revenue Commission, which, as all know, makes sweeping recommendations involving State acquisition of all rent-receiving interests in land from the zemindar down to the occupancy *raiyat*, with the object of bringing Government and the cultivator of the soil into direct contact in the relationship of landlord and tenant.

It is known to all, the opinion is sharply divided as to whether this colossal undertaking will achieve its main object of improving the lot of the tiller of the soil. It also is a self-evident fact that if full compensation is paid to the rent-receiving interests there cannot be any profit to the exchequer; and if acquisition is carried out ultimately to the very bottom of the scale it seems inevitable that for many years the annual loss would run into crores of rupees. Huge loans will have to be raised to foot the compensation bill and pay for the cost of the scheme. A comprehensive revision of the record-of-rights is an essential preliminary. The signatories of the Majority Report themselves admit that they recognise that the proposal involved a fundamental change in the rural economy of Bengal, affecting vitally the whole social and economic structure of the province, that it can only be carried out gradually over a term of years, and that it would be a most formidable undertaking which will tax to the full all the resources of Government.

If we turn now to the consideration of the position of Government today, the absurdity of expecting any action to be taken to put into effect these recommendations is surely obvious. We are in the midst of a national emergency with the safety of the province threatened, when the food crisis demands all the attention of Government; expenditure on the nation-building departments and social services has been curtailed to a minimum, and the balancing of the budget is completely out of the question.

There is no need to enlarge any further upon the utter impracticability of the scheme, at any rate as far as the present is concerned, but I should like to make a few brief remarks about the future, when these questions will inevitably have to be considered. I think steps will have to be taken to clear up some of the complexities of the land revenue system. What those steps are to be must be a matter of long and earnest consideration in the more tranquil atmosphere of peace time conditions. But those steps ought not to involve a social upheaval such as procedure on the lines of the report must entail.

It is true that the lot of the cultivator is often hard. Rents vary considerably. Many cultivators have lost their lands which pass into the hands of non-agriculturists. The landless labourers have increased in numbers, and these have few statutory rights to protect them. Incidentally one of the chief criticisms of the Floud Commission's recommendations is that the supposed benefits of State acquisition are not to be extended to these cultivators.

I cannot help feeling that the biggest problem of all—which should come first and take precedence over all schemes of acquiring the rights of

zemindars and others who have cash-paying tenants below them—is to do something substantial for *bargadars* and other landless labourers. If the value of the produce with which they have to part is assessed in cash, it will be found to be many times greater per acre than that paid by occupancy *raiyats*. So these are the people who are really suffering.

I therefore suggest that the Government should give their attention to the question of conferring rights on *bargadars*, so that their position is protected like that of the occupancy *raiyats*, that the share of the produce is, if not commuted in cash, reduced to a reasonable proportion.

In return for this and other sacrifices which the rent-receiving classes may be called upon to make, steps should be taken to simplify the system of recovery of rent through the Courts, which at present gives rise to absurdly high litigation costs and delay in realisation with inevitable accumulation of arrears.

Legislation to remedy these evils can be introduced, and I am convinced that many of the existing hardships——

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed to continue for half a minute more.)

——and inequalities may be rectified by statesmanlike attention to each of these and to the many other problems affecting the welfare of the rural population of Bengal.

I therefore feel that the existing framework of the land tenure system should remain as it is. Within that framework many adjustments can be made and many difficulties removed by suitable legislation on the lines of the Tenancy Acts.

Mr. JOGENDRANATH MANDAL : Mr. Speaker সাহেব :—বাংলার বহু জেলার বহু স্থানে খাজনার হার অত্যধিক থাকায় প্রজাসাধারণ যে কষ্ট ভোগ করিতেছে একথা সকলেই জানেন। কিছুকাল পূর্ব্বে এই অত্যধিক খাজনার হার কমাইবার জন্য Rent Enquiry Committee নামক একটি Committee গঠিত হইয়াছিল। খাজনার হার অত্যধিক ব্যতীত প্রজাসাধারণের আর একটা অসুবিধার কথা আছে। আজ আমার বক্তব্য সেই বিষয়ে। মাননীয় রেভিনিউ মন্ত্রী মহাশয় খাজনার কি রকম নিয়ম আছে তৎসম্পর্কে হয়ত বই থেকে কিছু পড়িয়াছেন কিন্তু ব্যক্তিগত বিশেষ কোন অভিজ্ঞতা আছে বলিয়া মনে হয় না এবং সেই খাজনা দিতে প্রজাসাধারণের কি কি অসুবিধা হয় সে সম্বন্ধে যে তাঁহার জ্ঞান খুব কম তাহা তিনি স্বীকার করিবেন। অনেক ক্ষেত্রে প্রজাদের খাজনা in kind দিতে হয়। আধি-বর্গাদার জমিদারকে জমির ফসলের অর্দ্ধেক খাজনা প্রদান করে। এই যে আধি-বর্গা এবং ধান্য-কড়ারী system আছে পূর্ব্বে বঙ্গীয় প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের ৪০ ধারা অনুযায়ী এইগুলি তুলিয়া দিবার ব্যবস্থা ছিল। এই ৪০ ধারার বিধান বলে যে সমস্ত প্রজা ধান্য কড়ারী বা বর্গা system পছন্দ করে না তাহারা Collectorএর নিকট দরখাস্ত করিয়া তাহাদের দেয় খাজনা আর্থিক খাজনায় পরিণত করিতে পারিত; এবং চতুপার্শ্বস্থ জমির যে নিরীখ ধার্য্য আছে তদনুসারে খাজনার পরিমাপ করিয়া লইতে পারিত। দুঃখের বিষয় ১৯২৮ সালে যখন প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের সংশোধন করা হয় তখন ঐ ৪০ ধারা omit করা হয়। বর্ত্তমানে ঐ ধারা প্রবর্ত্তিত না থাকায় প্রজাসাধারণের বড়ই অসুবিধা হইতেছে। হয়ত বলা যাইতে পারে যে ৪০ ধারা

এতদিন পর্য্যন্ত Statute Bookএ ছিল তখন প্রজাসাধারণ এই ধারার সুযোগ গ্রহণ করে নাই কেন? এবং ধান্যের মূল্য commute করায় নাই কেন? ইহার অনেকগুলি কারণ আছে। অনেক ক্ষেত্রে জমিদারেরা নানারূপ স্তোকবাক্য দ্বারা প্রজাসাধারণকে ভুলাইয়া রাখেন। ব্রাহ্মণ জমিদারগণ অনেক সময় পৈতা দ্বারা প্রজাদের হয়ত জড়াইয়া ধরিয়া বলেন "তোমাদের কোন ক্ষতি করিব না, তোমরা ৪০ ধারার সাহায্য লইও না।" প্রধান-মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে আমি এই বিষয়ে বিবেচনা করিতে বিশেষ ভাবে বলিতেছি তিনি জানেন তিনি যখন বরিশালে যান তখন হাজার হাজার প্রজা তাঁহার নিকট এই নিবেদন লইয়া উপস্থিত হইয়া থাকে যে "ধান্য-কড়ারী প্রথা তুলিয়া দিন"। বরিশালের বহুস্থানের লোক সহস্র সহস্র দস্তখতযুক্ত দরখাস্ত আমার নিকট দাখিল করিয়াছে। ঐ দরখাস্তে তাহারা বর্গা ও ধান্য-কড়ারী প্রথা তুলিয়া দিতে প্রার্থনা জানাইয়াছে। অন্যান্য জেলাতেও এইরূপ অবস্থা। আমি ফরিদপুর, ঢাকা, খুলনা এবং মৈমনসিংহ জেলার কথাও এইরূপ জানি। তাই আমি অনুরোধ করি যে বঙ্গীয় প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের ৪০ ধারা পুনঃ প্রবর্ত্তন করিয়া ধান্যের পরিবর্ত্তে টাকার দ্বারা খাজনা দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করা হউক।

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I wanted to say a few words on motion No. 17 of Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz, but the speeches of my honourable friend the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan and the European member who have spoken compel me to offer a few remarks on the motion about the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission.

Sir, it is gratifying to find that the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur does not offer any intrinsic objection to the acceptance of the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission. He only claims that landlords should get a fair compensation, but he says that the time is very inopportune for giving effect to a gigantic proposal like this.

Sir, I would submit that no one in this House ever suggested that legislation on the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission could be passed during this session of the Legislature and that the law could be given effect to from April next. It is not that, Sir, but certainly Government could have come up with tentative proposals. The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur himself has admitted that several years will be taken to look into the assets and liabilities of each zemindar. If that is so and if he recommends that work should begin after the war, then I do not know whether it will take half a century or more to give effect to the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission. Why should we not begin our work just now? Let us have the tentative proposals of the Government. The proposals will be before the whole country. The proposals will be criticized and then after criticisms are received, Government will be able to come to a final decision. No one says that legislation can be passed today, nor do we subscribe to the proposal that everything should be postponed till after the war. We do not know how long the war is going to continue. The war may continue for five or seven years more. If that is so, my honourable friend's proposal means that all constructive steps should be held in abeyance till after the war. We do not subscribe to a proposal like that. On the other hand, I would submit that in the interests of the zemindars themselves, the earlier the recommendations are given effect to, the better

for them because zemindars ought to see that the whole world is moving towards some kind of socialism and some sort of socialistic State is bound to be established in India also in the fulness of time. Under the new conditions which are bound to come, the zemindars can never expect to get any compensation for acquisition of their interests. But under the present circumstances opinion is almost unanimous that some compensation should be given to them. Therefore, it is more in the interests of the zemindars that legislation should be gone into as early as possible. I hope, Sir, that Government will come forward with their tentative proposals—not proposals like those of the Chief Minister who in formulating his proposals said these were not the proposals of Government as a whole but only his own individual surmise, because he gave two contradictory proposals which have not met with the support of the country or any section of the people.

Then, Sir, as regards the motion of my honourable friend Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz, I would say that that is a very important problem. Every section of the House will admit that lands are fast passing out of the hands of agriculturists to those of non-agriculturists. During the present crisis that we are passing through more lands will pass from the hands of the agriculturists to those of the non-agriculturists because the former will have to sell their lands as they cannot get any loans in the mufassal under the present conditions. To buy their foodstuffs they will have to sell their lands faster than they have hitherto been doing. Therefore, this problem has assumed very great importance. I want to know what Government have been doing with respect to this. We expected that this Government during these 18 months would consider the question seriously and come forward with some Bill, but we find that Government have done absolutely nothing. If they have done anything, they have not disclosed it. Sir, I think that this is an important problem; this is not a problem concerning only a few cultivators, but it is a problem concerning the whole of Bengal. If lands pass out of the hands of agriculturists and go to the hands of people who do not cultivate lands themselves—they have their lands cultivated by *adhiars*, *bargadars* or labourers—there cannot be satisfactory cultivation. We cannot get full return out of lands if they are owned by these classes of people in place of the genuine cultivators. Therefore, it is a national loss. If lands pass out of the hands of agriculturists to those of the non-agriculturists, it would in itself be a national loss and the sooner an end is put to this sort of thing, the better it will be for Bengal, and I hope Government will take prompt action in the matter.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Sir, I hope you will allow me to speak for one minute only. The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan and the honourable member from the European Group have said that it is not feasible to bring in a legislation on the lines of the recommendations of the Floud Commission at least during the war because the financial aspect of the scheme is beyond the reach of Government. But, Sir, I would say that the Floud Commission recommended one thing very definitely, namely, agricultural income-tax. They recommended that that could be done instantly—even during the war. Sir, I ask Government why they have not brought forward such a legislation.

The previous Government prepared a Bill, the Bill was gazetted, and a Select Committee was going to be appointed on the Bill. But this Government is sitting idle.

Sir, as regards compensation, the Advocate-General has given his opinion that the Legislature is not bound to give full compensation. Whatever compensation the Legislature thinks fit, it can award. So, I think there is no difficulty on that score also.

Mr. SHAH SYED GOLAM SARWAR HOSAINI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদ বাংলায় সর্ব্ববাদিসম্মত। ভূতপূর্ব্ব জনপ্রিয় মন্ত্রিসভা এই জমিদারী প্রথা উচ্ছেদের জন্য এবং জনমতের মর্য্যাদা রক্ষার্থ ফ্লাউড্ কমিশন নামে একটা কমিশন নিযুক্ত করেছিলেন। কমিশন জমিদারী প্রথা উচ্ছেদের পক্ষে সর্ব্ববাদিসম্মত রিপোর্ট দিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান প্রোগেসিভ দলের মন্ত্রিসভা সেই রিপোর্টকে Writers' Buildings এ আট্‌কে রেখেছেন। স্যার, সেই রিপোর্টের মধ্যে বর্দ্ধমানের মহারাজা এবং ব্রজেন্দ্রকিশোর রায় চৌধুরী note of dissent দিয়েছিলেন এবং জমিদারী প্রথার পক্ষে মত প্রকাশ করেছিলেন এবং সেই রিপোর্টে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে ধমক দিয়েছিলেন যে জমিদারী প্রথা উঠে গেলে দেশে কমিউনিজ্‌ম্ ও সোস্যালিজ্‌ম হবে। আমি বলতে চাই যে দেশে যদি কমিউনিজ্‌ম্ ও সোস্যালিজ্‌ম্ আসেত সে জমিদারী প্রথা থাকার দরুণই আস্‌বে। জমিদারের নির্য্যাতনে ও নিস্পেষণে মানুষ গৃহ-ছাড়া হবে, অন্নবস্ত্র হারা হবে আর সেই সময় মানুষ সেই সকলের আশ্রয় নিতে বাধ্য হবে। জমিদারী প্রথা উচ্ছেদের পরে দেশে যে নূতন একটা ভাবের সৃষ্টি হবে তাতে কোন রকমে ঐ বিষাক্ত জিনিস দুইটী আস্‌বে না। সুতরাং এদেশকে কমিউনিজ্‌ম্ ও সোস্যালিজ্‌ম্ থেকে রক্ষা কর্‌তে হ'লে জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদের বিশেষ প্রয়োজন।

আর একটা বিষয় আমি বল্‌তে চাই। আমাদের বাংলাদেশ শিল্পের দিক দিয়ে অত্যন্ত পশ্চাৎপদ; বাংলার শিল্প সূতিকাগারে বল্‌লেও চলে। বাংলার শিল্পের উন্নতি ক'র্‌তে হ'লে অনেক টাকা পয়সার দরকার। সে হিসাবে জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদের পর বাংলার শিল্পের উন্নতি হবে এবং বেকার সমস্যার সমাধান হবে। তার কারণ জমিদারেরা লক্ষ লক্ষ কোটি কোটি টাকা পেয়ে সেই টাকা দিয়ে যখন জমিদারী কিন্‌তে পার্‌বে না এবং invest করবার জন্য অন্য কোন পথ থাক্‌বে না তখন বড় বড় ব্যাঙ্কের সৃষ্টি হবে এবং বড় বড় কলকারখানার সৃষ্টি হবে, তাতে ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য ও শিল্পের উন্নতি হবে এবং দেশের লোকের অন্নবস্ত্রের সমস্যার সমাধান হবে। কাজেই বাংলার ব্যবসাবাণিজ্য ও শিল্পের উন্নতির জন্য অতি সত্বর জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদ করতে হবে।

তারপর জমিদারেরা আজ কাঁদাকাটি কর্‌চেন জমিদারী প্রথা রাখ্‌বার জন্য। আমি বল্‌তে চাই যে একদিন এই জমিদারকে দেশের লোক ভক্তি ক'র্‌ত, সম্মান ক'র্‌ত; কিন্তু আজ জমিদারের নামে মানুষ ভয়ে পালিয়ে যায়; আজ জমিদারদের মানব না বোলে দানব আখ্যা দেওয়া যায়। আগে জমিদারেরা আদর্শ লোক ছিলেন; প্রজার সুখ সুবিধার জন্য ডাক্তারখানা, দীঘি, রাস্তা প্রভৃতি করাতেন কিন্তু এখন তাঁরা বিলাসপ্রিয়, কলিকাতাবাসী এবং মোটর গাড়ী বিহারী। প্রজাদের ভার নায়েব গোমস্তাদের উপর এবং তারা প্রজাদের কশাইএর মত কেটেকুটে সর্ব্বস্বান্ত কোরে আসামের জঙ্গলে এবং পার্ব্বত্য ত্রিপুরার বনে পাঠাচ্ছে। এই সব কারণে বাংলাদেশকে রক্ষা ক'র্‌তে হ'লে জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদ অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয়। আমার মনে হয় বাংলার

রেভিনিউ ডিপার্টমেণ্ট এ বিষয়ে সম্পূর্ণ উদাসীন এবং এ বিষয়ে যদি তাঁরা যত্ন নিতেন তাহ'লে এই রিপোর্ট এতদিন Writers' Buildings এ আট্‌কে রাখ্‌তেন না, নিশ্চয়ই পরিষদে উপস্থাপিত কর্‌তেন।

Maharaja SASHI KANTA ACHARYYA CHOUDHURY, of Muktagacha (Mymensingh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I personally do not see any objection to giving effect to the recommendations of the Floud Commission as a whole but I, as a representative of the land-holding community, must object to the piecemeal method by which the recommendations are being dealt with. It is dangerous to take up any proposition in part. For example, if the proposition is that "a man should be hanged if found guilty," if we would only take up the first part of the proposition and hang all men leaving out the second part, viz., "if found guilty," it might be too late to try to give effect to the second part.

It would be better to pause a while before taking an irrevocable step. Should the representatives of the people think that such a step as contemplated by the Floud Commission would usher in the millenium, let them have it by all means but might I take the privilege to point out, Sir, that if the Government acquires only the rights of a certain class of landholders and does not acquire the rights of others above the rank of actual tillers of the soil such as under-*raiyats* and *bargadars*, etc., it would only mean to give a class a bad name and hang it. That would be only to find a temporary remedy for the chronic illness of this province. Might I also mention that it would be the duty of Government to assess the properties in an equitable way in purchasing by the State. The reasons are so evident that it is hardly worth mentioning. But still to make my point clear, I would suggest that the Government should take into account the present as well as the past value of the properties to be acquired. This is essential, as many disabilities are creeping in daily on account of the fast changing circumstances. So an account of the time required to give effect to the policy should also be taken into consideration.

Sir, I am forced to say that the remedy does not lie merely in following the recommendations of the Floud Commission, but in industrialisation of the country, thereby drawing away the superfluous population of the country; besides if we could increase the produce of the country and give facilities for better economic marketing, we could justly say that we have been able to solve the problem to a great extent, otherwise, as I have said, it would be only a makeshift arrangement helping nobody.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, we are extremely grateful for the two speeches delivered on behalf of the landlords, and specially for the speech of the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan to whom we are all extremely grateful, in view of the fact that he has made a real contribution to the debates that have taken place this afternoon. The speeh delivered by the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur has been couched in a language of dignified restraint and at the same time resourcefulness from the landlord's point of view. But I wish to point out that in one or two matters the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur seems to have overlooked certain patent facts. He begins

by saying that an extensive enquiry should be undertaken before any drastic step is taken. Now, Sir, it is well known that only about two decades after the promulgation of the regulations of the Permanent Settlement it was found that there was an outcry on behalf of tenants in consequence of the rigorous measures that were taken by landlords for realisation of rents. There were riots all over Bengal at one time, and a Commission was instituted by Government, the result of which was the Rent Act of 1859. That was considered insufficient and there was again a Rent Commission which led to the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. Even then the situation was not considered satisfactory and in 1923 a committee was appointed to investigate the whole question of relation between the landlord and the tenant in Bengal. The Bengal Tenancy Act was amended which gave the tenants some relief, but still there is dissatisfaction throughout the country. It cannot, therefore, be said that extensive enquiries have not been made. The vast mass of literature that has now grown up round this question of abolition or the modification of the Permanent Settlement has been the result of laborious researches into the question from every point of view. Sir, it is evident that after so much has been done Government should not remain inactive and not be doing anything. As a matter of fact the cut motions of which notice has been given show the feeling of the House that nothing very definite has been done by Government during all this time. It is therefore a matter for consideration whether we should really be resting on our oars waiting for better times or waiting for the termination of the war before we can even make a beginning in this matter.

I think, Sir, I am voicing the opinion of the vast majority of the members of this House when I say that the time is already come when we should really be doing something. Now, Sir, the question is how to begin, and on that point my esteemed friend the Revenue Minister will tell the House what the decision of the Government is at the present moment. The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur has said that the landlords would have no objection if proper compensation is given and the principle of compensation adopted be uniform. I submit, Sir, that the rate of compensation cannot be uniform solely by reason of the fact that the zemindaries differ in value not merely from one part of the province to another but even in various parts of the same district. There are certain zemindaries which can hardly be said to be available in the market at less than 25 years' purchase; there are other zemindaries which a man would not care to purchase for even eight times its annual income. In these circumstances, Sir, each case has got to be decided on its merit, and as the Revenue Minister will tell the House, when we proceed to give compensation we will be guided by the judgment of a tribunal which will be set up in order to decide what compensation should be paid to each landlord at the time when the estate is acquired by Government.

There is one point on which I wish to make a brief comment. The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur has said that when I proposed 1/6th of the gross annual value of the produce of the tenant as the rent to be paid it would

be about cent. per cet. more than the rate which obtains at the present moment. The reason is after paying 1/6th of the revenue he will be absolved from paying anything else. As a matter of fact, payment on the value of produce is more equitable than payment of rent on the basis of area, and therefore in my opinion—and that is only my personal opinion—the rent to be assessed ought to be on the value of produce, but these are matters of detail. Sir, at the present moment all I can say is that we have waited too long and it is time for us to take some action, and when my honourable friend the Revenue Minister will tell the House, the House will be able to realise that while we have not been hasty we have not also done anything which can be condemned on the ground of hesitation to tackle the problem bristling with difficulties. It is one of the most complicated problems perhaps in connection with the solution of revenue problems in any part of the world. A problem like this cannot be solved in a moment, nor can it be solved in a way which will give satisfaction to all concerned. The utmost that we can do is to adopt the path of equity and justice, and if that is done, I hope the House will agree with me that the proposal which is going to be put forward for consideration by the House by the Revenue Minister is the only solution of the difficulty under present circumstances. We cannot wait till the end of the war before we can take action. We have waited too long and the manner in which we are going to proceed will show that we have been extremely cautious.

Sir, I do not wish to take up the time of the House because my friend the Revenue Minister will give the House a complete picture of the manner in which the Government has decided to meet the requirments of the situation.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: May I put one question to the Hon'ble the Chief Minister? Will he please tell us for whose benefit he wants to take away the property of all—from the lowest to the highest—and does he want to say that he will take away the maintenance of all the middle-class people? For whose benefit he will take the property away I want to know.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall first of all deal with the cut motion of my honourable friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal—failure to bring under cultivation culturable wastes under *khas mahal* as well as elsewhere. Sir, the total area of culturable waste land in Bengal is about 27,10,000 acres or 6 per cent. of the total area of the province. It is not quite accurate to say that the Government has not done anything with reference to colonisation schemes. There have been four such schemes—one in the 24-Parganas Sunderbans, one in Bakarganj Sunderbans, one in Chittagong and one in Rangpur. I agree entirely with my honourable friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in view of the present abnormal situation prevalent in the country it is absolutely essential that the attention of the Government should be directed towards this important question. It is a question which is linked up with the question of "Grow More Food" campaign.

Then, Sir, I come to the cut motion of my honourable friend Mr. Harendra Nath Dolui—necessity of reducing rent by 50 per cent. of the lands lying uncultivated in the inundated areas of different subdivisions of the district of Midnapore. I do not know whether my honourable friend was visualising the peculiar position of the Ghatal subdivision in the Midnapore district. In any event the rates of rent in Midnapore are roughly about Rs. 3-15 per acre as against Rs. 5-13 in the 24-Parganas and Rs. 7-7 in Hooghly. I took the trouble of going through the statistics for the last 100 years, and I have discovered that Midnapore has suffered from visitations of nature almost every eight years. Such visitations have usually taken the form of flood. Flood is also beneficial for the purpose of depositing silt in certain areas, but along with it comes sand and sand-covered areas do suffer. The remedy which is open to the tenantry in that area is one which is contained in section 38 of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

With regard to the general question of the reduction of rent, Mr. Speaker, you may have recollection that a Rent Reduction Enquiry Committee was appointed so far back as 1938. After five long years I am expecting its report by May. As soon as the report comes into my hands, this is a matter which will certainly attract my attention.

The next motion stands in the name of my friend Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz for the purpose of drawing the attention of the legislature to prevent agricultural lands from passing into the hands of the non-agriculturists. Sir, this is, I agree, a very serious question, but it is a question which has been accelerated due to a variety of circumstances over which I personally as the Revenue Minister of the province have no control. The extension of non-occupancy rights is sometimes attributed to be one cause; the passing of the Money-lenders Act in a particular form is supposed to be another cause. If these are the causes which exist and for the operation of which agricultural lands passed out of the hands of the bonâ fide agriculturists to non-agriculturists, that is a matter which has been engaging my attention.

Sir, the question arose elsewhere whether or not the Land Alienation Act in the form of Land Alienation Acts in other provinces could with certain modifications and variations be introduced in this province in the circumstances of the case.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I enquire if the Hon'ble Minister is aware that in Great Britain an enactment was passed even at the beginning of the war, I mean just a few months after the war was declared, prohibiting the transfer of land into the hands of non-agriculturists, so that the war-profiteers and middle-classes may not go and invest money on land and throw out the agriculturists into the landless labouring class.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, my attention was drawn to that piece of legislation. I have tried my best always to obtain the necessary Acts, but acts of God and acts of man conspired against the fulfilment of my desire.

Sir, the next cut motion stands in the name of my honourable friend Mr. Abdul Karim. He deals with a proposal for the amendment of section 48C of the Bengal Tenancy Act. This is a minor matter and is bound to engage my attention.

My honourable friend Mr. Sarkar has dealt with the question of non-observance of the Bengal Services Recruitment (Communal Ratio) Rules in the Department of Court of Wards in the matter of appointments for the management of the estates. Sir, here the position in law is this: that the Communal Ratio Rules do not in terms of the law apply to the Court of Wards. As a rule certain zemindaries on certain grounds are assumed by the Court of Wards and when these zemindaries are assumed, naturally there are employees of the zemindaries and those employees are not dismissed but as a rule taken over, but with reference to new appointments I made it a rule that principles analogous to Communal Ratio Rules might be made applicable to the Court of Wards. Those principles still hold good, and my honourable friend is not right in saying that there is not a single Scheduled Caste man in the working of the Department of Court of Wards under the Board of Revenue.

My honourable friend Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal dealt with the immediate necessity of abolishing the *adhi barga* and *dhannakarari* system. These are two expressions not familiar to anybody excepting my friend Mr. Mandal—one deals with the system whereby certain produce is permitted to go to a person above the rank of a tenant and the other deals with the question of loan of the produce. Sir, these questions have engaged the attention of the Floud Commission. The Floud Commission has not been able to solve them and my honourable friend desires to solve both these problems this evening before this House.

I shall now deal with the most important cut motion moved by my honourable friend, Mr. Serajul Islam. My friend has made his motion very broad. He speaks about the recommendations of the Floud Commission. As is well known, the recommendations of the Floud Commission are in the main divisible into two parts—one set of recommendations dealing with the rights of the estates *vis-a-vis* the landlords and the tenants, and the other set of the recommendations contained in the Floud Commission Report on pages 176-184 dealing with certain important and helpful suggestions for increasing the productivity of the soil. Sir, those recommendations contained on pages 176-184 may very well be taken into consideration by Government. In fact, many of them are engaging the attention of the appropriate departments. Most of these recommendations have very little relationship with the Revenue Minister of the province.

Then, Sir, I come to the most important question which has been discussed tonight. It is well known that the Land Revenue Commission submitted the report in March, 1940. Since then, apart from the detailed examination of the recommendations of the Commission by Mr. C. W. Gurner, Special Officer appointed for the purpose, this Government have had the advantage of having the majority and minority views of the Commission on the main issues debated on the floor of both the Houses

of the Legislature. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the arguments used by the majority to justify the proposal, it has to be recognised that there is a widespread feeling of uneasiness in the country over the existing system of land tenure in the province. The cultivators in general who find themselves in a state of chronic economic distress, blame the existing system for all their miseries. There is a volume of public opinion demanding abolition of the Permanent Settlement for having allowed a whole hierarchy of rent receivers from the proprietors down to the non-cultivating *raiyats* to intercept a large income and thereby deprive the State of its legitimate share of the produce from land. On the other hand, the landlords in a body find themselves greatly embarrassed by the trend of tenancy legislation of recent years which has curtailed their rights and privileges and made it increasingly difficult for them to collect their rents and pay their dues to the State.

In these circumstances this debate tonight is a useful contribution to the history of the land revenue system of the province.

The Commission are agreed that provided a practicable scheme can be devised to acquire the interests of all classes of rent receivers on reasonable terms, the policy should be to aim at bringing the actual cultivators directly under Government. That, in the view of the Commission, is the main justification for their proposal which they recognise to be of far-reaching consequences to the entire economic and social structure of the province. They consider that the best course would be to carry through, in the first instance, the acquisition of all superior rights above the lowest grade of cash paying under-*raiyats*; at a subsequent stage the interests of landlords who have given their lands in *barga* might be acquired after tenancy rights have been conferred on the *bargadars* and their produce rents commuted to fair cash rent by fresh legislation

Sir, I am now dealing with the question of acquisition at first of all superior interests above the cash paying under-*raiyat*. As regards *barga* system they consider that it is a problem which is peculiar to itself and so far as I am aware it has served the interests of both the landlord and the *bargadar*.

For the present, therefore, I am confining my attention to the first part of the scheme I mentioned just now. The Commission express the view that any compensation to be paid must be calculated at a flat rate for all interests, as different rates for different estates and tenancies, however justified theoretically, would lead to endless administrative difficulties and complications. The Commission observe that the rate of compensation which received more support than any other among their members was ten times the net profit; the remaining members proposed 12, 15, and 20 times. Sir, I have to consider whether or not compensation for all classes of estates and categories of interest will be paid on the basis of a flat rate. Undoubtedly it has the merit of administrative simplicity, but the factors which determine the capitalised value of an estate or interest are so various that it would not be fair not to take them into account in assessing compensation.

Sir, after giving the most anxious consideration to the matter, I have come to the conclusion that the rates of compensation should vary between 10 to 15 times the net profit according to the nature and circumstances of the estate or interests concerned. As for Wakf, Debottar and other Trust Estates I have considered the recommendation of the Commission that the rate of compensation should be 25 times the net profit so that the income which is now devoted to religious, charitable or educational purposes may be maintained.

Government are fully aware that there is an apprehension in the minds of the landlords in general lest the machinery for assessment of compensation to be set up in connection with State purchase should be such as to jeopardise a just and reasonable assessment of their claims. To remove their anxiety and generally to ensure that the matter is dealt with impartially and every reasonable care Government propose that a tribunal of a judicial nature should be constituted to decide compensation for each interest and that its award shall be final.

The Commission have recommended State acquisition of superior interests only if a practicable scheme can be devised on reasonable terms of compensation. But the Commission are not very sure of the financial implications of their own proposal. It is probably for this reason that they have taken care to emphasise that although financial results have to be carefully considered, they have not supported a scheme of State acquisition solely on the ground that it may lead to a financial gain; if it resulted in a financial gain that would be an additional advantge, but their reommendation that the State should be brought into direct relations with the actual cultivators is the outcome of other more vital considerations.

The Commission have given a financial acount of State purchase on the basis of *raiyati* assets and compensation taken at 10 times the net income. This shows an increase of revenue of 2·23 crores. Similarly on the basis of compensation at 12 times and 15 times the net income, the increase has been estimated at 1·47 and ·33 crore respectively. When the entire loan is liquidated after 60 years of State acquisition, there will be no more interest and sinking fund charges and there will be an additional increase of 4·78 crores. But the Commission's estimate is vitiated by the fact that it is at variance with their recommendation to carry through, in the first instance, the acquisition of all rent-receiving interests above the lowest grade of cash paying under-*raiyat*. It is also to be noticed that the Commission have made no attempt to calculate the loss of revenue that will accrue to Government as a result of their proposal of State acquisition, although they have hinted that there might be loss under some heads. It will be clear, therefore, that there is a certain amount of uncertainty about the financial implications of State acquisition.

In view of the financial risks the Commission have suggested that an experiment of State acquisition should first be made on a small scale in *khas mahal* areas. This, according to them, would provide some indications of the financial, social and other results that might be expected to ensue if State acquisition was to be undertaken district by district. The

necessity for caution has also been emphasised by Mr. Gurner. State purchase, according to him, should not be proceeded with in such a manner that the first move might make a final commitment in perpetuity; it would be well to tackle the problem by beginning with a self-contained experimental measure which would not imply financial disaster if results proved a failure or the Government policy were subsequently revised. He has, therefore, suggested that powers should be taken by Government through legislation to take up State purchase in different areas at such times as Government might decide. In view of the financial and other risks involved in the whole project of State acquisition, this is undoubtedly the only realistic way in which any responsible Government can proceed with an undertaking of this nature. Moreover, a revision of record-of-rights would be an essential preliminary to the scheme of State acquisition. This fact has been specially emphasised by the Commission, and it has been stated that even on two or at best three party basis on which the work could be run, it would take not less than 25 to 30 years to complete State acquisition of the entire province. Thus apart from the question of caution, administrative reasons also will not perhaps permit the operation being undertaken in more than a limited area. On these considerations I propose to make a beginning with the scheme of State purchase by an experiment in a district when the revisional operations which are now going on there are completed.

I have in this connection considered the various alternative schemes which have been put forward before the public. The following are some of the more important schemes:—

(1) That Government do acquire all the proprietary interests of all landlords paying revenue direct to Government on payment of compensation at 10 times the average income of the last 10 years counting back from April, 1941.

(2) That Government do take over charge of all zemindary estates together with the interests of intermediate tenure-holders for the purposes of a management just like Court of Wards' Estates, giving them only 30 per cent. as allowance, setting apart 10 per cent. of the gross collection to a reserve fund so that at the end of 25 or 30 years there may be sufficient money to pay off the landlords at 10 times the net income.

(3) That all rights in lands shall vest in Government, the rent collectors being paid a permanent *malikana* of no more than 50 per cent. of this average net income for a period of 10 years previous to the war and that the actual tillers shall be required to pay to the Government one-sixth of the value of the total produce of their land.

The Land Revenue Commission discussed the first proposal, but did not favour the idea of acquiring only the proprietary interests. Their reasons were that if the *patnidars* and other tenure-holders on fixed rents were

allowed to remain, the revenue from land would remain inelastic, and there would still remain a large measure of subinfeudation above the actual cultivator, which is the chief objection to the existing system. I agree with this view.

The second scheme virtually means paying the landlords from their own pockets. In Court of Wards' management Government do not get anything in the shape of profit. The surplus income after meeting all charges of management and other dues goes to the ward. Under the proposed scheme a part of the income, that is to say, 10 per cent. will be withheld from the owner of the property to be paid to him after 25 or 30 years as the price of State acquisition of his property. On the ground of equity and good conscience such a scheme of State acquisition does not secure my approval. Moreover, it would not be administratively feasible to keep accounts of management of the properties of innumerable proprietors, tenure-holders and other categories of rent receivers on the lines of Court of Wards administration.

The basic principle of the third scheme is that by special legislation all proprietary rights in lands, waters, forests and mines, etc., shall vest in the Government. This raises a question of first rate constitutional importance. Leaving aside the highly controversial question as to whether the State, the zamindars or the *raiyats* were the actual proprietors of the soil before the Permanent Settlement, it is now admitted on all hands that Regulation I of 1793 conferred a large measure of proprietary rights on the zemindar. It is for this reason that section 299 (2) of the Government of India Act, 1935, provides that neither the Federal nor the Provincial Legislature shall have power to make any law authorising the compulsory acquisition of lands, etc., unless the law provides the payment of compensation for the property acquired and either fixes the amount of the compensation or specifies the principles on which, and the manner in which, it is to be determined. Any legislation to vest proprietary rights in lands, etc., in the State without payment of any compensation, as the scheme envisages, will, therefore, be expropriatory in nature and will not be permissible under the Government of India Act. The proposal to pay the rent collectors at 50 per cent. of their net income will amount to an outright expropriation of the remaining 50 per cent. without payment of any compensation. Such a method of acquisition of private property will be without a precedent in the history of State acquisition.

Under the scheme the actual tillers of the soil will be required to pay to Government 1/6th of the value of the total produce they get from the land. Now the actual tillers may be the *raiyats*, under-*raiyats* or *bargadars*. The Land Revenue Commission has estimated the average incidence of rent of *raiyati* and under-*raiyati* holdings at Rs. 3-5 per acre respectively as against the gross agricultural produce of Rs. 50 per acre. The proposal to fix rent at 1/6th of the total produce will, therefore, mean that the existing *raiyati* and under-*raiyati* rents will be increased to Rs. 8-5 per acre. This in itself is sufficient to prove that the scheme is utterly impracticable.

Sir, I come now to the following tentative decision of Government on the Land Revenue Commission's recommendations:—

(1) that Government accept the policy of bringing the actual cultivators into direct relation with Government and of acquiring in the first instance the interests of all classes of rent receivers above the lowest grade of cash-paying under-*raiyats*;

(2) that the rates of compensation should vary between 10 and 15 times the net profit according to the nature and circumstances of each estate as interest;

(3) that a tribunal of a judicial character should be set up for the assessment of compensation in each case and the tribunal's decision shall be final;

(4) that Government should undertake legislation in the matter on these lines as early as possible after going through the technical formalities enjoined under the Government of India Act; and

(5) that after these proposals are considered by a committee of leaders of this House, in view of the financial and other risks involved this experiment should first be tried in a district where the revisional operations are almost in a process of completion.

In this connection, Sir, I should like to sound a note of warning at this stage. Impatient idealism has indeed demanded reform in an archaic system, but we must realise that the present times are not propitious for these changes and, therefore, I am making proposals with utmost caution and without the possibility of committing too great mistakes. It is a matter of regret that my honourable friends in the Opposition thought fit to bring forward cut motions for purposes of complaining against the land revenue system and the inactivity of the present Government in formulating their scheme on the Floud Commission's report. Sir, the Commission was appointed in 1938, made its report in 1940, and the Government of the day appointed an officer to consider the far-reaching implications of the Floud Commission; he made his report in 1941, and the Government of the day was in power till December, 1941. Sir, we do not know what the economic structure of the society is likely to be after the war is won. One of my friends has criticised me for inactivity, but my inactivity in this direction has not been inactivity at all. The Revenue Minister of the province during the last fifteen months—not eighteen as my honourable friend has made a mistake in his calculation—has to deal not only with the ordinary revenue administration but he has to deal with an important portion of the civil defence work including the question of evacuation of persons, tenants and institutions and the payment of compensation to them, the question of commandeering of buildings for military purposes, and the billeting of soldiers in private houses. (Cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Opposition benches.) My friends may say, "Oh, oh!" Well, Sir, they claim priority on my attention and to that priority I have conceded.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, in paragraph 137, page 64, of the Land Revenue Commission's Report the Commission has recommended for

the imposition of agricultural income-tax as a transitional measure. The previous Government introduced a Bill for that purpose. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Government has given a go-bye to this question of imposition of agricultural income-tax. I should also like to know what has happened to the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill which was published in the Gazette by the previous Government for since the present Government came into power nothing has been heard of that piece of legislation.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as the question of imposition of agricultural income-tax is concerned, I may inform my honourable friend that this is a matter which has been engaging the attention of the Ministry, but it is a matter which does not relate to the Department of the Revenue Minister.

The motion of Babu Madhusudan Sarkar that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Abdul Karim that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Harendra Nath Dolui that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Serajul Islam that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 30,27,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Pramatha Nath Banerjee that a sum of Rs. 30,27,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Tuesday, the 16th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 16th March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 170 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

(When starred question No. 150 was called.)

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister is absent and no arrangement has been made to answer on his behalf. You will be pleased to allow this question to stand over.

Mr. SPEAKER: This question will stand over

Digging of pits on either sides of Taki Road and compensation.

***151. Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware—

(*i*) that contractors engaged in doing repair works to the Taki Road running through Barasat and Basirhat subdivisions have dug pits on both sides of the road for taking earth; and

(*ii*) that damage has been done to agricultural lands for such works?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the owners or tillers of agricultural lands referred to in (*a*) (*ii*) have been paid any compensation;

(*ii*) if so, what is the rate of such compensation; and

(*iii*) what steps, if any, Government propose to take to prevent the pits referred to in (*a*) (*i*) from becoming breeding grounds of mosquitoes?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*i*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of compensating the sufferers?

(*d*) If so, at what rate?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Yes, in a few cases.

(*b*) (*i*) and (*ii*) No compensation has yet been paid. The Collector of 24-Parganas has been requested for assessment of compensation payable.

(*iii*) The road runs through a water-logged area. Pits dug on high lands will be provided with outlet drains.

(*c*) and (*d*) Due and fair compensation will be paid at the rate to be assessed by the Collector.

Delay in censoring the letters of security prisoners.

***152. Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware that under the rules the security prisoners are entitled to write 4 letters and receive 8 letters per week subject to the condition that such letters are to be censored by the Intelligence Branch of the Police?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister also aware that under the present system of censoring such letters either written by or to the security prisoners generally take about two months to reach the proper person?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reason therefor; and

(*ii*) what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) I am aware that there have been isolated instances of delay in censoring security prisoners' letters but it is not a fact that those letters generally take two months to reach the proper person.

(*c*) Originally security prisoners were entitled to write two and receive four letters a week. In September last these limits were doubled. Consequently due to the abnormal increase in the number of letters, there has been some unavoidable delay in the censorship of letters in some cases due to the inadequate number of censoring staff. Additional staff have since been appointed and it is hoped that the position in this respect will improve from now.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the denial that letters take two months to reach the proper person, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the average delay that takes place for letters to reach the destinations?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is impossible to answer that question unless the whole list is scrutinised.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that a letter addressed to me by prisoner Gouri Sen, which is with me now, reached me after more than three weeks?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is an information within your knowledge.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the cases are not isolated instances as mentioned in his reply, but generally this is the case?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It may be that there are generally some delays, but there are delays which are negligible, there are some delays which are regrettable. I have given a general reply.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is considering the desirability of improving this position so far as censoring and delivery of letters are concerned?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, we have taken steps, and if that is insufficient we will do more.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he can assure this House that from now after the new arrangement has been made, letters will reach the addressees in about two weeks' time, if not earlier?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That I cannot guarantee, and I do not know really how much improvement has been effected. We have got to wait and see how this works. If it is unsatisfactory we will do more.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if his attention was drawn to a certain letter posted from the Alipore Central Jail on the 25th December which reached its destination only on the 4th of March?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is too vague a question and he cannot reply to it.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will instruct the censoring staff to be very much prompt with regard to letters which require urgent attention and urgent reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that will be done.

Refusal of certain facilities to political security prisoners by Superintendent of Barisal Jail.

***153. Sj. ASHUTOSH MALLIK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Superintendent of the District Jail, Barisal, has refused to allow political security prisoners—

(*i*) to have money deposited in their names in the Jail office with which they may buy necessaries permissible under the jail rules;

(*ii*) to have cooked food sent from their homes even on festive occasions and days when this is allowed under the jail rules;

(*iii*) to have fruits sent from their homes; and

(*iv*) to have trunks and suit-cases for keeping their clothes, books and other articles of use allowed to them?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) No cooked food is allowed under the rules even on festive occasions.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*iv*) No.

(*b*) As the Jail Superintendent has not done anything contrary to the provisions of the rules, I do not propose to take any action in the matter.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*) "yes," that is, the Superintendent's refusal to have fruits sent from their homes, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state under what authority has he refused this?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got the rules with me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) that "No cooked food is allowed under the rules even on festive occasions," will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the particular rule which prevents this?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The negative I cannot prove.

Mr. SPEAKER: The position is this. I have not seen the rules, and I do not presume to know the rules. The Hon'ble Minister's answer is, "No cooked food is allowed under the rules even on festive occasions." What he means to say is that there is no provision according to which cooked food may be sent to the prisoner.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I quite follow you, Sir. My question is that in cases where there is no specific provision under the Security Prisoners Rules, the ordinary rules of the Jail Code shall apply.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Let me make the position clear. I have said that under the rules no cooked food is allowed. The question was, "Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Superintendent of the District Jail, Barisal, has refused to allow political security prisoners—(*ii*) to have cooked food sent from their homes even on festive occasions and days when this is allowed under the jail rules:"; my answer is "No cooked food is allowed under the rules even on festive occasions." Now, if there is in the rules anything contrary to what I have said, I shall be obliged if that rule is pointed out to me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that in actual practice in the Calcutta Jails—Presidency and Central—not only on festive occasions but also on other occasions cooked food under the usual control and supervision of the medical officers is allowed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know, but I can do this that I can take up this matter and see that the provision is made to this effect.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to take notice of a fact that Mr. Amiya Kanta Roy, a security prisoner of Barisal, and a relation of an honourable member, was refused to have money deposited in his name in the Jail office, and will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry into the case?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I promise to make an enquiry.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of allowing fruits to be sent to these prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will look into all these cases and see what can be done.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*i*), where it is said, "No", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the rules do make provision for the deposit of sums of money in the names of security prisoners by persons approved by the Intelligence Branch?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The question was whether the District Superintendent of Jail, Barisal, did such and such, as to that I have said "No". As regards general proposition, it may be.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that in the Barisal Jail the Superintendent does not extend the similar interpretation of the rules as is interpreted by the Superintendents of other jails?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Interpretation of a rule is entirely in the hands of the authority concerned.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Exactly, Sir. Not only what the Hon'ble the Chief Minister says is correct, but what we are driving at is also correct.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has promised to look into the matter in all cases.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is considering the desirability of giving standardised instructions to the Superintendents, so that the practice followed by them may be on a uniform basis?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am prepared to look into the matter.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) where it is said that no cooked food is allowed under the rules, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he means ordinary Jail Rules or Rules for Security Prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Security Prisoners Rules.

Curtailment of privileges in respect of interviews and correspondences of security and political prisoners in Midnapore Jail.

***154. Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDER:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that security and other political prisoners in Midnapore Jail, arrested since August, 1942, have, by a circular of the Government, been deprived of the privilege of interviews altogether;

(*ii*) that their privilege of receiving and replying to letters has been curtailed to one and one respectively in place of 8 and 4 respectively per week; and

(*iii*) that similar deprivation and curtailment of privilege referred to above has also been applied to security and other political prisoners belonging to Midnapore district lodged in different jails of Bengal other than Midnapore?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister also aware—

(*i*) that the homes of most of the aforesaid prisoners have been devastated; and

(*ii*) that the families and relations have in many cases been victims of death and distress due to recent cyclone, flood and famine in Midnapore?

(*d*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of withdrawing the ban regarding interviews and correspondences referred to in (*a*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The action referred to was taken as a measure of security on account of the situation created by the widespread and serious campaign of violence and destruction then going on in the district of Midnapore.

(*c*) I have no information; but special instructions were issued by Government to the District Officer and Superintendent of Jail to communicate to the security prisoners concerned any information received from their homes regarding the effect of the cyclone.

(*d*) The matter is under my consideration.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of answer (*b*) where the Hon'ble Minister states that the action was taken as a measure of security, will he be pleased to explain what he means by "measure of security"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That I cannot paraphrase.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that many political security prisoners lodged in the Midnapore Central Jail do not belong to the Midnapore district but belong to other districts such as Faridpur and other places? Does the answer relate to prisoners of other districts also?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that. It may be so.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has considered the desirability of allowing the prisoners belonging to other districts to have all the amenities which are allowed to the security prisoners in other jails?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not see how this question can arise.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: It arises in this way. The reasons which have been stated for disallowing the privileges——

Mr. SPEAKER: You have put a question, and the Hon'ble Minister says that it does not arise. I think the question arises in view of the fact that all prisoners lodged in the Midnapore Jail do not belong to Midnapore. The Hon'ble Minister says that there may or may not be prisoners belonging to Faridpur. In that case, it becomes a hypothetical question.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: About that I have already put a question when I asked him whether he was aware, and he said that he was not aware. My next question is whether Government will consider the desirability of allowing security prisoners belonging to other districts to have the ordinary amenities which are allowed to such prisoners in other jails.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall make an enquiry if there are prisoners who have got any complaints in any respect.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister accept it from me that I was lodged in the Midnapore Jail at one time, but I did not belong to that district?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the circular regarding curtailment of privileges as mentioned in question (*a*)(*ii*) and (*iii*) to which the Hon'ble Minister has answered "yes" has since been withdrawn?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not remember.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what after the return of normal time is the justification for the retention of this stringent order?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Well, Sir, it is a matter of opinion. The matter will be considered if I am asked to do so.

Council of Ministers and their advice to His Excellency the Governor.

***155. Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (*a*) Has the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department been drawn to a report published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Town Edition) of the 10th October, 1942, wherein, among other things it was stated that the Chief Minister has been reduced to the position of a nonentity, the administration today in Bengal being carried on in an autocratic fashion by the Governor and officials of the permanent services over the heads and in most cases behind the back of the Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues?

(*b*) Is it a fact that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee in course of a statement published in the Press on the 24th November, 1942, immediately after his resignation, observed that "the Governor has chosen to act in many vital matters in disregard of the wishes of the Ministers and has depended on the advice of a section of permanent officials"?

(*c*) If the answers to (*a*) and (*b*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the instances, if any, in which the advice tendered by the Ministers has not been accepted by the Governor?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, the Council of Ministers have taken or propose to take to meet this situation?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) and (*d*) In the public interest I must decline to furnish the information asked for.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*) and (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what "public interest" may be affected if the information is supplied?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The interest of the people of Bengal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that there is a genuine demand from the public that such information should be furnished?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not received any letters.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that on the floor of the House repeated demands have been voiced and he has himself on one or two occasions informed the House of his embarrassing position?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, my quesion is whether he is aware of repeated demands?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am aware that there is some demand.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if Government is considering the desirability of enquiring into or inviting public opinion on this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Government have nothing to do with this matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the question is that the Hon'ble Minister has been asked certain questions regarding an important constitutional issue and the Hon'ble Minister has withheld that information in the name of the public. If he has withheld on his own account saying, "I refuse to disclose this information," that is a different matter, but he has sought the protection of the public. Therefore, I am entitled to ask him whether Government is considering the desirability of ascertaining public opinion and thereby finding out whether public interest would be jeopardised?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I know, Sir, that this answer will give rise to supplementary questions and I am prepared to satisfy public curiosity so far as it is permissible under the rules.

Sir, I do not admit the paraphrase put on my statement by any newspaper. Secondly, Sir, I beg to remind the honourable members that while I was making my statement, I said "there are cases in which the advice tendered has not been accepted by His Excellency the Governor acting in his discretion." There may be two cases, may be ten, may be half a dozen, or may be anything; I have not said in how many cases, but I did say "in some cases". That has happened throughout India and it happens throughout the world where a similar system of administration is in force——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Nowhere in the world such a Constitution exists.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. He is making a statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I take the position that although I admit that there have been instances—I am using plural which may mean 2 to 200—in which the advice I have tendered has not been accepted by His Excellency the Governor. I am not prepared to say in how many instances this occurred. It may be that I declined in my own interest or in the interest of the public. I have said in my answer that I am refusing at the present moment to disclose the information in public interest. This is a matter in which I have exercised my judgment. As a responsible Minister of the Crown I have got to realise the responsibility that I owe under my oath of office and having regard to my position as

a Minister of the Crown still in office and having regard to the fact that I am bound by certain oaths which I took at the time I assumed office, I have decided that in the public interest it would not be wise or advisable or even permissible for me to say in how many instances my advice has not been accepted by His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to state if the Hon'ble Ministers were consulted by Dr. Mookerjee when he made the statement contained in (*b*) of the question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. Questions must be on a matter relating to the department over which the Hon'ble Minister presides. Sir, may we enquire if this particular question whether Dr. Mookerjee consulted the Chief Minister or Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq before he issued the statement comes under any particular department of Government and if not, the question does not arise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Apart from that this is a part of the statement published in the Press by Dr. Mookerjee immediately after his resignation and when he had ceased to be a Minister. So, no question of consulting Ministers does arise. That question therefore does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*) and (*d*), may we enquire whether the constitution and organisation of Home Guards in the province of Bengal with popular support from various progressive parties is one of the instances in which the recommendation of the Ministry was not given effect to by the Executive Government?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered definitely that he is not prepared to disclose in how many instances his advice was not accepted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I am only trying to find out from the Hon'ble Minister whether his objection is only to the number or to instances.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If notice is given of this question, I will first see whether I am entitled to give the information. If there is no objection, I will certainly supply the information.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Does the Hon'ble Minister agree with the statement made by Dr. Mookerjee that the Governor has chosen to act in many vital matters in disregard of the wishes of the Ministers?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Again I have to rise on a point of order, Sir. The question of agreement or no agreement does not arise as it is a question of opinion. Questions can be asked only to elicit facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know. Mr. Stark, I drew your attention in connection with your first question that this statement was issued after his resignation. You are asking the opinion of the Hon'ble Chief Minister as to whether he agrees with the statement or not. That is a question of opinion and so it does not arise.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: With reference to question (*a*) and answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he agrees with the statement in the report referred to, namely, that he has been reduced to the position of a nonentity?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The fact that so many questions are being put to me proves that we have not been reduced to a position of nonentity.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: With reference to question (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the statement of Dr. Mookerjee referred to in the question is correct?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I am citing rule 26 of the Assembly Procedure Rules which states as follows:—

In order that a question may be admissible, it must satisfy the following conditions, namely—

(*i*) it must be asked with the object of eliciting information;

(*ii*) it must not bring in any name or statement not strictly necessary to make the question intelligible, etc.

My point therefore is that a question is meant to elicit information and it should not ask for an expression of opinion as is provided in sub-rule (*v*), namely, it must not ask for expression of opinion or the solution of a hypothetical proposition. I submit therefore that the question whether the statement is correct or not is a matter of opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the whole difficulty has arisen due to the fact that the question is based on a newspaper publication. In fact, I doubt how far it was proper. However, the question is there and the answer is there and a certain statement has been quoted from the statement of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, and now a question has been asked as to the correctness of that statement. Certainly that is a matter of fact—no matter whether these statements are correct or not. Of course, it is quite open to the Hon'ble Minister in his reply to this question to say that in the public interest he is not in a position to disclose the facts. But the question, I rule, is relevant.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I submit a few points in this connection, Sir? I am drawing your attention to the form of this question where the questioner has definitely stated if the "attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge has been drawn to a report.....". Now, Sir, in view of that form of the question I submit that nothing irregular has been done in inviting the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to a certain Press report. And to that the answer is, "yes." I submit, therefore, that the question whether the statement is correct or not is a matter of opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already given my ruling that it is not a matter of opinion.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: On a point of order, Sir. My point is that you have stated that the statement of Dr. Syamaprasad

Mookerjee is a matter of fact, but whether that statement is true or not is absolutely a different matter. Mr. Satyapriya Banerjee has only asked to know whether Dr. Mookerjee had made the statement. If the Hon'ble Minister had said that he did not make that statement then no supplementary question would have arisen. But the question which has now been put is absolutely a new question which need not be answered without proper notice. I think under the rules the Hon'ble Minister is not required to answer it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already ruled that the supplementary question arises out of the present question, but the point whether the Hon'ble Minister will answer it or not is a different matter.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I wish to draw your attention to the statement attributed to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. It says that the Governor has chosen to act (1) in many, (2) vital matters, (3) in disregard of the wishes of the Ministers, (4) and has depended on the advice, (5) of a section, (6) of permanent officials. These answers contain various statement of facts, some of them may be true, some may be untrue, and some may be the mere opinion of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on the relation between him and the Governor. I submit that this is a confusion of facts, and I do not think I am in a position to give an answer which has been attempted to be drawn out of me.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Governor chose to act in many vital matters in disregard of the wishes of the Ministers?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered that.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in all those cases in which the Governor did not accept the advice of the Ministers he took the Ministers subsequently into consultation and whether the Ministers agreed with the views of the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not in a position to answer that question.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the arrest and detention of Mr. Satyapriya Banerjee, Mr. Sasanka Shekhar Sanyal and Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee are instances in which the advice of the Ministers were disregarded by the Governor?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that is going too far into details, and I cannot allow such supplementary questions.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Governor chose to act in many vital matters in disregard of the wishes of the Ministers even within the sphere of ministerial responsibility?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have already stated, I am not in a position to make a reply.

A.R.P. (Civil Defence) appointments in Chittagong.

***156. Khan Bahadur M. ANWARUL AZIM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Defence) Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) how many posts in the scale of Rs.50 upwards have been created in the A.R.P. side of Civil Defence Administration in Chittagong since 1941;

(*b*) how many of them have been filled up by—

(1) Muslims,
(2) Caste Hindus, and
(3) Scheduled Castes; and

(*c*) have these posts been sanctioned by the Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) 85.

(*b*) As on the 31st January, 1943.
(1) Muslims 39.
(2) Hindus 40.
(3) Scheduled Castes 3.
(*c*) Yes.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*b*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to assign the reasons for the paucity of Scheduled Caste appointments?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I regret very much that the number is so low, but I know that efforts are being made to recruit as many Scheduled Caste candidates as possible.

Defalcation at Mymensingh District Treasury.

***157. Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether any case of misappropriation of Landlord-fee according to Bengal Tenancy Act has occurred at the Mymensingh District Treasury?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what step, if any, was taken in the matter and with what result?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Rs.8,032.

(*c*) Four temporary Collectorate clerks and 4 mukhtears were prosecuted. All the clerks and one mukhtear were acquitted, two mukhtears were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for four years each. The case of one mukhtear is under retrial as ordered by the High Court. Departmental action was taken against the four clerks as a result of which they were dismissed from

service and permanently debarred from employment under any Government. A system of strict supervision and checking has been introduced in the Department to guard against similar defalcation in future. The question of recovering the loss is under the consideration of Government.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased, to state what is the special system of supervision and checking introduced after the detection of this defalcation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot say.

Appointment of clerks in civil courts of Dinajpur after the enforcement of Communal Ratio Rules.

***158. Mr. SYAMA PROSAD BARMAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of clerks appointed in the civil courts of the Dinajpur district since the enforcement of the Communal Ratio Rules; and

(*ii*) the number of these that have been given to—

(1) Caste Hindus,

(2) Muslims, and

(3) Scheduled Castes?

(*b*) Whether the Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in the case of Scheduled Castes?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*)(*i*) 11.

(*ii*) (1) 4.

(2) 6.

(3) One.

(*b*) Yes. *Vide* rule 7 of the Communal Ratio Rules.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Babu PREMHARI BARMA: With reference to answer (*3*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the name of the candidate and the caste to which he belongs?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: No, Sir; the name and the caste of the candidate are not available from the materials before me.

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: In reply to question (*b*), "Whether the Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in the case of Scheduled Castes," the Hon'ble Minister has stated, "Yes," but we find from answer (*a*)(*ii*)

that out of 11 appointments only one has gone to the Scheduled Castes. Are we to understand that the Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in the case of the Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have given my answer. If my honourable friend desires to refresh his memory with regard to the Communal Ratio Rules, I can state the whole rule, but it is a long affair. The only difficulty in this matter is the question of vivisection. So far as I can say on page 6——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not read out the rule.

Allowances paid to jurors for attending sessions courts.

***159. Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that a juror attending sessions court from within a distance of five miles does not get any allowance; and

(*ii*) that irrespective of his social status, a juror attending sessions court for two days only is given a single inter-class fare for railway journey but no halting allowance?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to modify the existing rules granting allowance to jurors?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Under the rules a juror attending court for two days gets for the first day of attendance a daily allowance of not less than Re.1 and not more than Rs.5 which should not exceed the actual travelling expenses. For the second day he gets either an allowance not exceeding Rs.2 if an ordinary juror or Rs.3 if a special juror, or an allowance similar to that payable for the first day of attendance.

(*b*) The matter will engage the attention of Government.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of increasing the allowance of ordinary jurors?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has answered that "the matter will engage the attention of Government."

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that in cases of some of the jurors who come to attend Courts from a distance, they have got to come one day earlier and they have got to stay two or three days even if they have to attend only for one day?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a question to be answered by the Hon'ble Minister. It is a question of inference.

Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he or the Government has received representations from the

Professors of the Carmichael College in Rangpur to exempt them from serving as jurors on account of their not being granted any travelling allowance or conveyance allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The question of the honourable member is resolvable in two parts—whether I have received any representation; the answer is in the negative; whether Government has received any representation is a difficult question to answer because the expression "Government" is a compendious expression.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Remission of rents in respect of holdings in Char Tamaraddi, police-station Hatiya, Noakhali.

49. Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether any amount of rent due to the Government by the tenants is remitted every year in respect of their respective holdings in Char Tamaraddi, police-station Hatiya, in tauzi No. 1776 of the Noakhali Collectorate?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amounts that have been remitted every year during 1935 to 1941;

(*ii*) the grounds for which remission had to be given to the tenants during the period; and

(*iii*) the number of holdings in this area that were sold for arrear of rents and purchase by Government during the period?

(*c*) Is it a fact that a large area of land measuring about 3 miles in length and 2 miles in breadth which is locally known as *Begugalia* is a Dazi (low) area and does not yield crops owing to accumulation of water during the greater part of the year?

(*d*) If so, what steps, if any, have been taken for drainage of the water in the area?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Yes, in respect of the holdings that deserve remission.

(*b*) A statement giving the information is laid on the Table.

(*c*) and (*d*) No water now accumulates in the area and the lands are yielding fairly good crops as a result of excavation and re-excavation of the following *khals*:—

(1) Bagular Dona (re-excavated).

(2) A *khal* from Begugalia Dogi towards north up to Begular Dona (excavated).

(3) A *khal* from Begugalia Dogi towards south-east up to Sonadia *fari* (excavated).

(4) A *khal* from Begugalia Dogi towards north-west up to Begular Dona known as Hora-Sori *khal* (excavated).

Statement referred to in the reply to clause (b) of unstarred question No. 49.

Year.	Amount remitted on the ground of diluvion.	Amount remitted on the ground of damage to crops.	Amount remitted on the ground of Government purchase.	Total amount remitted.	Number of holdings sold for arrear of rents and purchased by Government.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1935	1,093	1,050	317	2,460	20
1936	751	1,155	190	2,096	23
1937	1,620	18,220	391	20,231	28
1938	2,120	5,290	128	7,538	8
1939	120	1,950	106	2,176	18
1940	1,005	17,220	926	19,151	33
1941	..	620	205	825	6

Supply of clothing to under-trial prisoners in jails.

50. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether there is any provision made by the Government for supplying the under-trial prisoners in Jail with necessary clothing?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact—

(*i*) that the majority of the under-trial prisoners, at the time of their arrest, have in their possession only one cloth (*dhoti*) and rarely a shirt or a banian;

(*ii*) that they cannot clean their clothes as they have nothing to change with;

(*iii*) that they are not supplied with soap and soda for cleaning their clothes;

(*iv*) that a large number of under-trial prisoners are remanded to jail custody for several months together pending the police enquiry and trials in the Magistrate's and Judge's Courts;

(*v*) that the clothing on their person at the time of their arrest became tattered and unusable by the time the police enquiry and trials in courts are finished;

(*vi*) *that a large number of undertrials pass their days in summer and* winter with their tattered clothes or a small stripe of cloth tied round their waists; and

(*vii*) that the Jail authorities are empowered only in a very rare case to supply an under-trial prisoner with only a piece of cloth?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of making any provision for the supply of clothing and washing soap to under-trial prisoners in jail?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Under-trial prisoners are supplied with clothing according to provision of rule 925 of the Bengal Jail Code, a copy of which is placed in the Library.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) I have no information to these effects.

(*iii*) Soap and soda may be obtained by the undertrials at their own cost. Under Jail Code Rule 922(*1*) they are required to keep themselves and their clothing and bedding clean.

(*iv*) to (*vi*) I have no such information.

(*vii*) Jail Code Rule 925 authorises supply of the required clothing.

(*d*) and (*e*) Do not arise.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House, in view of the fact that some of the prisoners in jail custody are kept for months together and in view of the fact that they are detained there without trial, whether Government will make an arrangement for giving them cloth and washing materials and other things?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Certainly, it will be done.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) where the Hon'ble Minister states that he has no information to these effects, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what information he has in his possession?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information to these effects.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question is "that the majority of the under-trial prisoners, at the time of their arrest, have in their possession only one cloth and rarely a shirt," in answer to which the Hon'ble Minister says, "I have no information to these effects." There must be some information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not necessarily.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If you want me to look into the matter I will do so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: *With reference to answer (iv) to (vi) where it is stated, "I have no such information,"* will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he had made necessary enquiries in the department before he had the answer prepared for him?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I did not enquire myself, but enquiries were made and the answer was prepared.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: With reference to answer (*vii*), the question was whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that the Jail authorities are empowered only in a very rare case to supply an under-trial prisoner with only a piece of cloth. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the rules permit the Jail authorities only in rare cases to supply cloth?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a question of the rules. Why are you asking a question about the rules? The rules are there. I disallow it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*)(*iii*) that "soap and soda may be obtained by the under-trials at their own cost" and also that they are required to keep themselves and their clothing and bedding clean, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the Hon'ble Minister's information as to the machinery for keeping their bedding and clothing clean when soap and soda cannot be supplied by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot give the information asked for.

STARRED QUESTION:-

(to which oral answer was given)

Government measures for supply of essential commodities.

***61. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware of a feeling of dissatisfaction in the country on account of the rise in the cost of living of the common people and of the consequent great distress caused to them?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken by Government for assuring an easy and steady flow of essential commodities at a fair and reasonable price?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, what steps have been taken to achieve this objective?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The various steps that Government have taken, with varying measures of success, to ensure an easy and steady flow of essential commodities are too numerous to mention. It will suffice to say that the twin objects of Government's policy have been—

(*i*) the procurement of supplies from other provinces, with the help of the Governments of those provinces and Central Control Authorities, as in the case of wheat and sugar; and

(*ii*) the equitable distribution of the available supplies through a system of permits, controlled shops, licensing of merchants and so forth.

In the case of rice, the main objective of Government's policy is to obtain control over the rice markets of this Province through regulated purchase of paddy and rice in some of the rice-growing areas of the Province, and the utilisation of these reserves to regulate the Calcutta and the mufassal markets. To this end, Government have already embarked on large-scale buying in a number of districts, and have controlled the movement of grain from these and other areas, with a view to preventing speculative and competitive buying.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer regarding the procurement of supplies from other provinces, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the agents for purchase or procurement from other provinces are selected?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: In the past, of course, I do not know what was the procedure but at present——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: For the future——

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: For the future there is the controlling authority—the Civil Supplies Directorate—who will select the agents for taking the crop from other provinces as permitted by those Provincial Governments.

Point of Order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister has entirely given a wrong answer and he has given evidence that he knows nothing about it. It is better for such an Hon'ble Minister to avoid giving foolish replies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. The position is this: it appears to me that you put a question to the Hon'ble Minister the answer whereof you know better than the Hon'ble Minister himself, because you have yourself said that the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister is incorrect. That clearly indicates that you know what the answer ought to be or what the answer is. In these circumstances if I had attended to your question and if I understood that you knew the answer from before, I would certainly have disallowed this question. You asked a certain question and he has replied to that question. You say that that answer is not a correct answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Have you followed that answer?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I have not quite followed that answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is patent to everybody.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will just try to see what was the question that you put and what answer he has given.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*)(*i*), viz., the procurement of supplies from other provinces, with the help of the Governments of those provinces, I asked a specific question as to how agents for such procurement are selected to which the Hon'ble Minister has said, "I do not know what had happened in the past. So far as the future is concerned, the selection will be made by the Directorate of Civil Supplies."

I submit, Sir, that so far as the answers to held-over questions are concerned, if any Hon'ble Minister comes ready to answer those questions where a class of people rush in where angels fear to tread, he must come prepared. I submit, Sir, that questions are put on the floor of the Assembly as one important parliamentary manner by which to keep an eye on the day-to-day administration of Government. Interpellations are recognised methods of watching the activities of Government. It may be, Sir, that I have that knowledge and I knew the answer, but that is entirely out of place. Een with the knowledge within myself I am entitled to ask a question to elicit information and place it before the House

Mr. SPEAKER: That is another matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, you have ruled me out, but I am only submitting for your consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already said that if you know the thing and if you still want to have something from the Hon'ble Minister in charge, all questions must be *bonâ fide* requests for information. You need not discuss the theoretical aspect at all. You put a question and he has given an answer. That answer has not satisfied you.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That answer is totally incorrect.

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be absolutely or deliberately incorrect.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, no; foolishly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, if that remark remains I am not going to answer any question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you of all people know very well that it is desirable to get things done in a courteous manner. That would be better. It is no use calling names in this House. You have called a particular Minister's action as "foolish". I say, you are not entitled to say that. You cannot criticise or discuss a particular answer. That is definite in the rule

which runs thus: "No discussion shall be permitted in respect of any question or of any answer given to a question," and you discussed it saying that the answer is a foolish answer. I won't allow that. You withdraw that expression.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I said that to you only as a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have criticised the answer. You ought not to have said "it is a foolish answer". That is wrong. It is a clear contravention of the rule.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a very wise reply!

Mr. SPEAKER: Even that is not permissible. The rule says definitely, "No discussion shall be permitted in respect of any question or of any answer given to a question."

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am not discussing at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can discuss it somewhere else by means of a resolution or a cut motion or in any other way, but you cannot discuss it here. You withdraw that expression. That is my ruling.

(Srijut Manindra Bhusan Sinha rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you on a point of order?

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: I rise on a point of information, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If to call black black or to call white white is an offence——

Mr. SPEAKER: No, that is not the point. The point is you are not entitled to discuss any question or any answer given. You have discussed a question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have not, Sir,

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I say you have discussed. I ask you to withdraw your remark with regard to this.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I will not withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case I will ask you to walk out from this House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You have no right to say that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly I have got that right.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Even the Speaker has to act according to the rules.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I won't tolerate this sort of thing.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I know your temper, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have asked you to withdraw from this House for the remainder of today's sitting. Mr. Roy, you are the Leader of the Party to which Dr. Sanyal belongs. I hope you will assist me in this matter. You know the rules that "the Speaker shall preserve order and have all powers necessary for the purpose of enforcing his decisions on all points of order. He may direct any member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Assembly, and any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting. If any member is ordered to withdraw a second time in the same session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself from the meetings of the Assembly for any period not longer than the remainder of the session, and the member so directed shall absent himself accordingly. The member so directed to be absent shall not be deemed to be absent for the purposes of sub-section" so and so. Now, the rules are clear and I consider the conduct of Dr. Sanyal to be grossly disorderly, and I have asked him to withdraw from this House. He has refused to obey my order. I will ask your assistance in this matter and I want to know whether you are prepared to assist me in this matter or not.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, with great respect I want to make a submission to you that unnecessary heat has been created over a matter like this. It would be better, Sir, to drop the matter altogether. I realise your ruling that the word "foolish" ought not to have been said, but we have had such expressions in the past. We will see, Sir, that in future your ruling will be obeyed.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one question here with regard to this matter. It is not a question that the word "foolish" is unparliamentary. In that case if I had asked him to withdraw the remark, that would have been sufficient. But here he has contravened the rule, and I said, "You have contravened the rule" but he said "No, I have not contravened the rule." The rules are clear. If I had seen that my ruling was wrong, I would have been prepared to withdraw this order of mine. But I see that although the rules have been repeatedly brought to his notice, he has deliberately violated the ruling of the Chair. In these circumstances, Mr. Roy, do you still ask me to withdraw this order and pardon him when he is not even prepared to withdraw that remark and apologise?

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: May I submit, Sir, that before you asked him to withdraw you did not, perhaps you forgot to, say that his conduct was disorderly. Of course, that is a technical matter. But in view of the peaceful working of this House I would still submit to you that it is better to drop the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Even if he does not apologise and withdraw his remark?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I owe a personal explanation at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I am talking to Mr. Roy. If you have got anything to say, I will hear you later on. I want to know from Mr. Roy again whether he says that Dr. Sanyal should be pardoned even without an apology.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Sir, I understand that he had no desire to disobey your ruling, and if you consider that the use of the word "foolish" is offensive he will certainly withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: He must do it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Am I at liberty to make a statement, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, whatever I have done and said I had not had the intention to disobey your ruling or the ruling of the President whoever he may be, but, Sir, I still submit that if you would kindly in a cooler atmosphere refresh your memory by reference to the proceedings you will discover that I had all along maintained that so far as the use of the word "foolish" was concerned, reflection, if any, was on the answer and not on the person answering. So if you say that it is unparliamentary I will certainly withdraw it. But if you say that observations or critical observations regarding any particular answer are not to be made, I will not press it, I will withdraw it. That is my position. But, Sir, the ruling must be yours which I will obey.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, from what has fallen from Mr. Roy it appears to me that he seems to think that some heat has been introduced in this matter. I must say that there is no question of heat at all. It is a question of the smooth working of the House. As I have made perfectly clear, it is not a question of the use of an unparliamentary expression alone, it is a violation of a rule, viz., rule 35, and I repeatedly brought that to your notice. You persisted that you had not violated it: I said that you had violated it. Still you persisted. And that is why I was compelled to propose a step—a very stern step no doubt—which I would be most reluctant to take in the case of any member of this House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If that is so, I withdraw so far as that portion is concerned.

Mr. SPEAKER: I accept this, and the matter is dropped. Question time over.

GOVERNMENT BILL.

The Bengal Finance Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I beg to present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Finance Bill, 1943.

Ruling on point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before demands for grants are taken up, I think I should say something with regard to a matter which relates to Dr. Sanyal again, and I am thankful to him on this occasion. I owe an apology to the House for not giving my decision on 12th March, 1943, on the question as to whether the names of the Hon'ble Judges of the High Court mentioned by Dr. Sanyal in his speech on a cut motion relating to the High Court should be expunged from the proceedings or not. I have gone through the matter carefully and it appears to me that he mentioned the names of the Hon'ble Judges as instances of happy selection and there was no discussion as to their conduct as Judges. The mentioning of the names does not infringe any law or rule. No question therefore of expunging the names of the Hon'ble Judges of the High Court from the proceedings does arise.

I should like it to be noted that I do not feel called upon, on the present occasion, to give my decision on the interpretation of section 86(*1*) of the Government of India Act.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

43—Industries—Industries.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 17,83,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries"

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100. My object is to draw the attention of the House to the absence of any post-war reconstruction proposals.

Sir, I would admit at the very outset that development of industries, particularly heavy industries, depends to a large extent on the Central Government. In this tariff laws play a great part and Provincial Government have no control over tariff. Another important factor is freight charges which again are under the control of the Central Government, Railways being a Central subject. So we cannot place the entire responsibility for the industrial development of the province on the shoulders of the Provincial Government. The Central Government also on account of its subordination to His Majesty's Government labours under serious handicaps. In fact, the industrial and commercial development of a people is inseparably connected with political freedom. We Indians are therefore eagerly looking forward to the day when India will attain an independent political status. As Bengalees we are not less eager to see that Bengal in her own turn is liberated from the Central domination. An independent Bengal—in an independent India—is our ideal.

And I hope the day is not far distant when Bengal will attain the status of a fully independent sovereign state which alone will ensure an all-round

economic, industrial and commercial development of the country. It is only in independent Bengal that the genius of her people can have a free and unhampered play. When we are our own masters and the proceeds of income-tax, the jute export duty and customs are fully our own, when we shall have our own Railways, Bengal with her enormous natural resources and potentialities is bound to be a wealthy and strong economic unit of the world. Whatever the future may have in store for us one thing is certain that post-war conditions will be quite different from what obtains at present and in the race of life that is going apace it is only those people who are well-organised, sagacious, alert and ever ready to take time by the forelock will survive the ordeal of the new birth. Even prosperous England and America already on the highest rung of the ladder of social security are busy maturing their new social security plans. Can we, a nation of paupers on the verge of starvation, afford to idle away our days? It was therefore very much expected that the Ministry would disclose during the discussions on the budget some of their post-war reconstruction proposals. But in this, just as in so many other fields of constructive activity, the Ministry has sadly disappointed us. Even in the limited scope vouchsafed to them they could plan a good deal for the industrial regeneration of the province. Electricity has already been playing a major part in industrial development and in the post-war world is bound to play a still larger part. Is the Ministry doing anything for a province-wide electricity scheme? The importance of machine tools can hardly be overestimated. Has the Ministry any plan for manufacture of machine tools? Why is the Ministry tinkering about making Bengal self-sufficient in respect of cloth, salt and sugar? Is there any plan to make our millions engaged in cottage industry, particularly the starving weavers, fit to face the post-war conditions with confidence? Is the Ministry taking any steps towards the solution of the important problem of nationalisation of the key industries? This is the time when a Ministry with imagination and drive could lay the foundation of a wealthier and happier Bengal. But to ask for anything like that of the present ill-assorted and effete team that is playing drakes and ducks with the destiny of the people must be a cry in the wilderness.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries —Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the policy of suppression of the All-India Spinners' Association, the Khadi Mandal and other allied institutions and stopping the work of these institutions for all practical purposes in view of the problem of scarcity of clothing materials.

Sir, the All-India Spinners' Association was started with the object of introducing the *charkha*, thereby facilitating the production of *khadi*—hand-spun and hand-woven clothing materials.

It urges upon the masses to take up spinning as a subsidiary occupation for the purpose of utilising the spare time at their disposal.

It seeks to give employment to millions of our people who sit idle for many months in the year for want of work. The programme includes cultivation of long-staple cotton and is being worked out on such lines and principles that there is no scope for profiteering and the question of unequal distribution as between the organisation and its wage-earners, the spinners, cannot arise at all.

It has got 17 lakhs of spinners on its roll. In Bengal the number of spinners would be about a lakh. The Khadi Pratisthan, the Khadi Mandal and other allied institutions though they have got distinct and separate identities are all affiliated to the All-India Spinners' Association and carry out the programme on the same principles under its direction and guidance. These institutions have grown up on the sacrifice of a noble band of selfless and devoted workers and today the progress made and the success they have achieved in course of 15 or 16 years are widely known throughout the country.

To meet the shortage of clothing materials on account of war conditions, these institutions began in right earnest to intensify their work and devoted their whole time and energy to increase the production as much as possible. This was the opportune time. Srijut Satish Chandra Das Gupta, the founder of the Khadi Pratisthan, with this definite object in view removed to Munshirhat, within the Feni subdivision, one of the biggest producing centres of Khadi Pratisthan. He manufactured a type of *charka* made of bamboo frame to make it easily available to the poor people at a price, *viz.*, 5 annas per *charka*. He distributed seeds for cultivation of cotton.

A few months after, when evacuation took place on a mass scale in the Feni subdivision, he took up the cause of evacuees so that they might get adequate compensation. But this the authorities could not tolerate. He was served with externment orders which he could not but disobey. He was convicted and sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment. Some of his workers also suffered imprisonment for similar offence. Another gentleman who took up the charge was also served with similar externment orders. Finally the Police took possession of the premises of the Khadi Prathistan at Munshirhat with all the properties movable or otherwise found there.

Almost all the organisations and their branches, particularly the producing centres, have been taken possession of by the Police with the result that production of *khadi* has stopped for all practical purposes and thousands of spinners and weavers have been thrown out of employment at a time when the food problem has assumed a serious turn and starvation has commenced.

These institutions grew up without any aid from the Government of the country. The Government showed a callous indifference to these institutions, probably because they had been working out the constructive programme of the Congress. It is one thing to put some workers under detention in jail but it is quite a different thing to close down the institutions at a time when the problem of scarcity of clothings has become difficult of solution.

Having regard to the present political situation in the country and having regard to the scarcity of clothing materials, the Government should immediately lift the ban so that these institutions may begin their work once again.

The Government is morally bound to give employment to these spinners who have been thrown out of employment, and utilise them for increasing the production of clothing materials in the country, but the budget does not indicate any planned scheme in that direction

Maulvi HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the sum of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the failure of Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Sugar Enquiry Sub-Committee, Bengal.

Sir, the Bengal Sugar Enquiry Sub-Committee was set up in June, 1940. This Committee was represented by various interests such as industrial, technical, scientific, agricultural and cane-growers. The terms of reference were as follows:—"To consider the position in regard to the production and supply of sugarcane in Bengal as well as the manufacture of sugar and sugar by-products and to make recommendations with a view to an adequate supply of sugarcane of good quality at prices fair both to the growers as well as to the manufacturers and the marketing of sugar and sugar by-products so as to secure a fair and reasonable profit to the manufacturers."

The Committee started its investigations on the line suggested in the terms of reference. It issued three sets of questionnaires to the parties concerned, that is, manufacturers, growers and the Department of Agriculture. It visited almost all the sugar factories and cane farms in Bengal and it thoroughly studied and considered the interests of manufacturers as well as the growers from their respective viewpoints.

Sir, the prospect of sugar industry and consequently of cane cultivation in Bengal is very great. Bengal is the greatest sugar-consuming province in India but she has to depend upon Bihar and the United Provinces for her supply. The sugar factories in Bengal that have been working are very much handicapped due to insufficient supply of cane, its deteriorated quality and transport difficulties. The grievances of the cane-growers are no less than that of the manufacturers. The question of market, price, weighment, trade allowances and cane diseases like "red-rod", "top-borer", "stem-borer" etc., is very acute.

After going into the pros and cons of all interests concerned and of the peculiar position of Bengal the Committee holds the opinion that section 3 of the Sugar Cane Act of 1934 should not be enforced in Bengal at present where the conditions are not similar to those of Bihar and the United Provinces. Such action would jeopardise the sugar industry in Bengal

which is still in its developmental stage. So, to meet the complicated position of sugar industry as well as of the cane-growers in Bengal, the Committee has recommended the formation of a Sugar Board in Bengal consisting of 17 members as referred to in paragraph 100, pages 65 and 66 of the report. Sir, though the Board represents various interests concerned, the interest of cane-growers is likely to suffer if the representatives of the cane-growers be not at least equal to the representatives returned by the Mills and Chambers of Commerce together for reasons stated in the foot-note of the report on page 66.

Sir, in paragraph 161, page 66 of the report the Committee has recommended the functions of the Board. They are as follows:—

(1) The development of sugarcane cultivation in Bengal in the best interests of growers, the industry and the province including experiments in respect of variety of cane, manures, methods of cultivation and control.

(2) The formation of schemes for better organisation of cane-growers with a view to fostering the development of cane cultivation.

(3) The development and improvements of communications and transport facilities for sugarcane, *gur* sugar and by-products of the industry (the member at this stage reached his time-limit but was allowed one minute more), and so on and so forth.

Sir, in conclusion I like to submit that the Committee submitted its report in May, 1942, in view of the fact that these recommendations could be given effect to before the current crushing season. But this Government has failed in its duty to implement the recommendations of the Committee for reasons best known to all within and outside this Legislature.

We, on this side of the House, demand that the recommendations of the Committee as a whole be given effect to immediately so that we can see better Bengal, industrial Bengal and agricultural Bengal.

With these few words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the schemes for the improvement of the silk industry and the proposed control of prices of cocoons and raw silk in the province.

Sir, with regard to the silk industry in Bengal volumes can be written and hours can be devoted to discussion of the various aspects of the question. What I would like to invite the attention of this House today to, through this cut motion, is the action of the present Government recently undertaken to control the prices of silk in the mufassal, the implications of which in my humble estimate are very serious indeed not only to the industry as a whole but also to the poor producers of silk in the mufassal. Sir, this industry has been, as you may be aware, conducted by a large number of cottage growers and agriculturists who sow and grow mulberry and produce

cocoons. At the stage of weaving also it is the cottage industries that predominate in the sphere of silk. For the last two years the Government of Bengal had been seeking some measure of control over this industry not so much, in my humble estimate, to improve the industry itself as to find the possibility of supplying His Majesty's Government with cheap silk forcibly acquired from the poor producers of silk. In January, 1942, the Government of India invited a conference of Directors of Industries and Sericultural Experts of various provinces and invited their suggestions for the development of filature silk, that is, silk which can be used in factories for uniform production of a certain class of silk fabrics which may be used for parachutes. Several conferences were also held thereafter. In these discussions the question of price control was raised and that became one of the bedrocks of the discussion. The Government of Bengal through their experts had at one stage virtually accepted to introduce this price control provided the Government of India were prepared to advance up to Rs. 9 lakhs for the development of filature industry in this province. Thereafter, Sir, conferences were held both here as well as in the districts in which varied opinions were expressed and so far as the persons affected by this suggestion were concerned the unanimous desire expressed by those in the trade and in the manufacture of silk was that there should be no control whatever.

Sir, I have not got the time to deal with the details of various conferences, and if it is necessary I am prepared to place facts before the Hon'ble Ministers concerned for further investigation. As a result of these conferences certain suggestions were made to the Government of India for issue of an Ordinance, but the Government of India felt unable to take such action. They advised on the contrary that if the Provincial Government wanted it they could take recourse to section 81 of the Defence of India Rules and control prices of silk. Sir, our enthusiastic Director of Industries, who is more enthusiastic for the supply of war materials than for the development of industries in the province, at once took the cue and the present order is the outcome of the same enthusiasm.

Sir, I am afraid there is no case made out for actual control of the production of silk and the supply of silk, and if there is any control necessary it is in the interest of the producers and the actual growers themselves. I have heard that the prices proposed or the schedule of prices made out were more or less on the basis of the 1939 prices and they are quite out of keeping with the present scale of prices. The price determined as a basis on which Government would work was Rs. 15-2 for "D" grade silk, which was not ordinarily produced in Bengal, with 4 annas less for every grade lower than that. The present price of silk in Murshidabad I have just got. The report of today's prices shows that the price of that quality of silk ranges between Rs. 40 and Rs. 50 per lb., *i.e.*, Rs. 80 per seer which is proposed to be controlled at Rs. 15 only. I submit, Sir, that this will seriously affect the interest of the poor producers of silk and I feel that when Government is not in a position to supply the essentials of life to these poor village agriculturists at reasonable prices, it is not the business of Government to force

them to sell their manufactured articles at a price which is not economical to them at the present moment compared to the present-day prices.

Furthermore, Sir, I am afraid that interference of this sort will have serious repercussions on the handloom industry of the province, because the silk will be entirely controlled in the interest of a limited number of filature owners who would not sell the yarn to the poor village weavers or handloom weavers of the mufassal.

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed to continue for one minute more.) It will also have effect on the mulberry-grower, because if the mulberry-grower does not get adequate price for mulberry he will switch back to the production of other food crops or other money crops. And, Sir, from the experience that we have had during the last three years of slight improvement we think that the cultivation of mulberry will again be meeting with a serious setback. Roughly speaking, from 20,000 acres in 1927-28, the cultivation of mulberry dropped down to 10,000 acres in 1937-38, but, Sir, during the last three years it has looked up and gone up to nearly 13,500 acres in 1942-43. The proposed control is likely to cause serious setback on mulberry cultivation. Representations have been made already to Government in this connection, and I have suggested that a conference should be called by the Hon'ble Minister in charge and the present control order should be withdrawn and if it is found impossible to withdraw the order at least Government will see their way to revise the price level and maintain the present market level of prices.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on improved cocoons and improved silk filature

Sir, the question has become very important indeed today having regard to the dearth in the supply of yarns, both silk and cotton yarns. If Bengal at this time could organise an adequate supply of silk at reasonably moderate prices, to some extent, the question of providing clothing for the people of this province could be solved. My friend Dr. Sanyal has mainly spoken with a view to criticise the control order which has just been promulgated. Of course, when he objects to the fixation of price below the ordinary economic level, there are grounds for legitimate objection, but he has also indicated that there should be some control in the interest of the cocoon-growers. One cause for the decay of the silk industry is that disease-free cocoons have not been used. There has not been any check in the quality of the cocoons which are being reared. Kashmir has greatly improved the silk production by introducing State control for the purpose of distribution of disease-free cocoon seeds of improved variety. It is necessary that our Government should also take steps, and in this respect I may

venture to suggest that a control of the distribution of good quality cocoon seeds will be to the benefit of the cocoon-growers and the greenage system should be introduced as early as possible.

I do not agree with my friend Dr. Sanyal in his criticism of the Director of Industries. I think—and I know after personal discussion with him—that the Director of Industries is trying to fix the price of the silk yarn at a rate which will prove economical, which will encourage higher grade of silk manufacture and which will not make it impossible for those who use silk yarn to carry on their business of manufacture and sale of silk goods. Just as a price below the economic level is to be avoided, similarly abnormal fluctuations in the price of yarn hit the cottage industry on silk as also the men in the silk trade very much. What is necessary is that there should be a steady price level at which different grades of yarn will be available. I am sure Government of this province will no longer neglect this problem but will attend to the needs of the cocoon-growers, to the needs of the silk-reelers and so arrange supply that the cottage industry silk weavers may get their requirements, and others—I mean the various silk mills—also may get the supply and take full advantage of the present market

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. J. R. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I move the cut motion standing in my name I would like to say a few words on the cut motion moved by my honourable friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan criticising the absence of any postwar reconstruction proposals. We have already indicated that we consider that it is a serious criticism against the budget that it contains no signs that Government are giving any consideration to the question of postwar reconstruction. Difficult problems will arise when many war workers, civil defence workers and others have to be demobilised and the small industries which have been encouraged by war orders are forced to close down through the cessation of war orders. In our opinion Government should now set up a planning machinery which assisted by expert advice can devise measures to relieve the difficulties which are bound to arise when the war is over.

Now, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this to raise a discussion on the inadequacy of the provision for the Department of Fisheries.

For years this party has been urging Government that in the Bengal fisheries lay a source of national wealth which was untapped and which Government should do everything possible to develop. In the 1941 budget the decision to revive the Department of Fisheries was at last announced but it was not until May, 1942, that a Director of Fisheries was secured, and it is apparent that he had to enter upon his duties without sufficient staff or adequate funds. We criticised the provision of Rs. 1 lakh in the

budget last year for the Department of Fisheries, but what are we to say when we find that only Rs. 34,000 of this provision has been spent? Of this Rs. 34,000 a substantial proportion must presumably represent the salary of the Director of Fisheries, the balance presumably represent the staff and the equipment which have been given to the Director. We would like to know what staff and what equipment have been given to the Director. Has he, for example, been provided with a motor launch? And, if not, what steps were taken by Government to secure a motor launch for him? Is it seriously believed that with a provision of Rs. 34,000 in the current year and a provision of Rs. 53,000 in the next year's budget the department can be of any value to develop the fisheries and to improve the supply of fish?

Since the decision to revive this department was taken, the question of increasing the supply of fish both for urban and rural consumption has become most urgent and important. It should be a part of the Government's "Grow More Food" plan. It should in fact be treated as a war problem and there should be no limitation as regards funds. So far as we can gather from publication in the Press the Director's activities have been confined to giving expert advice and encouragement to the development of local tank fisheries and to investigation into questions of river fisheries, etc. The real question which should be receiving the attention of the department is the development and marketing of the main inland and sea fisheries. We all know that there is an abundance of fish in the Bengal fisheries: we all know that fish is one of the most important articles of diet, but yet fish in Calcutta and in every other urban centre remains expensive. I have pointed out before that the main reason for this is that fishermen are being exploited by numerous middlemen. For example, the price paid to fishermen for *ketki* in Bakarganj and in Noakhali is about Rs. 8-12 per maund if less than two seers in weight or Rs. 13 per maund if over two seers in weight. In Calcutta the same fish is sold at Rs. 60 per maund. The first object of the Department of Fisheries should be to break the financial ring which is exploiting the fishermen so that on the one hand the fishermen will receive a fair price for his fish and on the other the consumer will be able to buy fish at a reasonable price. Today it is necessary to organise the fishermen themselves—to organise them into co-operative societies which would be able to do their own marketing and thus cut out the middlemen. The fishermen must in fact be treated in the same way as the agriculturists. They must be rehabilitated in the same way as the agriculturists and organised. For this purpose adequate staff must be found for the department. If it cannot be found in Bengal, which I do not believe is the case, it must be found elsewhere without delay. We would suggest, however, that this is a matter in which the Co-operative Department and the Marketing Officer should co-operate, and that it is a simple matter for the Director of Fisheries to give a short course of training in fishery work to a selected staff of this department. We would also urge that a course of practical and theoretical training in fishery work should be introduced in the Agricultural Institute at Dacca. Government, in our

opinion, should make every possible effort to train the staff as quickly as possible for service in the Department of Fisheries. We understand that some fishermen's co-operative soceities, as have been organised by the Co-operative Department in the past, have not been a success. But we suggest that this need not be the case if properly trained staff is devoted to the purpose.

Similar conditions apply as regards the Sundarbans fisheries. We understand that at one time as many as fifty motor launches plied supplies to Calcutta from the Sundarbans fisheries. The fishermen received something a few annas a maund and the fish were sold at Rs. 10 a maund in Calcutta. Competition by middlemen was so fierce that close mesh nets were used and small immature fish were caught. This business has now been stopped on account of military restrictions against motor launches. We suggest that Government should now take up with the military authorities the question of relaxing the restrictions so that a few motor launches which may have survived may resume the trade. But we are told that if Government are successful, licences should be granted under very definite conditions both for the protection of fishermen and for the protection of the consumer. Moreover, it should be a very definite condition when this trade is resumed that nets with less than a 2" mesh are prohibited. It appears to us, however, that Government have decided that the scope of this department must be restricted and that its funds must be limited for the period of the war whereas in our view Government should have taken an exactly the opposite view, namely, that the scope of the department should be extended as quickly as possible and funds placed at the disposal of the department should be unlimited.

One other minor point which I should like to mention relating to the Press statement issued by the Director of Fisheries is that a number of ice factories have not been able to work full time for want of oil and that therefore sufficient ice was not available for the preservation of fish. Since fish is a part of the food problem we would suggest that Government should take up immediately with the oil companies the question of priority supplies to these factories.

In conclusion, Sir, as I have already stated, I would suggest to Government to consider the main objects of the Department of Fisheries in its present circumstances, namely, the rehabilitation of the fishermen, the improvement of the main inland sea fisheries, and, the most important of all, the organisation of a marketing system for the fishermen which will eliminate the middlemen who are exploiting the fishermen and I have indicated how necessary staff for this purpose can be taken. We are not satisfied with the present objects and scope of the department; we consider that the allotment made in this year's budget is entirely inadequate and we would like to know whether the Government are prepared to develop the Department's activities along the lines I have suggested and also whether they are prepared to place all the additional funds which may be necessary during the current year at the disposal of the department.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the problem of scarcity of clothing materials and the failure of the Government in that direction.

ইতিপূর্ব্বে কয় দিন খাদ্যসমস্যা লইয়া আলোচনা হইয়া গিয়াছে এবং আলোচনান্তে প্রধান-সচিব মহাশয়ের নিকট কিছু আশার বাণী শুনিয়া বাকযুদ্ধের মুখ বন্ধ হইয়াছে। ইহার পরিণাম কি হইবে তাহা এখনও অনিশ্চিত সুতরাং অন্ধকারাচ্ছন্ন।

মানুষের জীবনধারণ করিতে হইলে যেমন খাদ্যের প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে ঠিক তেমনিভাবে বস্ত্রেরও আবশ্যকতা আছে। একথা মনে করা নিতান্ত অসঙ্গত হইবে না যদি আমি বলি খাদ্য অপেক্ষা বস্ত্রের প্রয়োজনীয়তা এক পক্ষে অনেক বেশী। অন্ন না জুটিলে ২।৫ দিন যাপন করা যত সহজ বিনা বস্ত্রে ২।১ দিন যাপন আমাদের অনেকের পক্ষে তত সহজ নহে। পুরুষের পক্ষে উহা কিছু সহজ হইলেও স্ত্রীলোকের পক্ষে মোটেই তাহা নহে। খাদ্যমূল্য যেমন ৪।৫ গুণ বৃদ্ধি পাইয়াছে বস্ত্রমূল্যও সেইরূপ ভাবে বাড়িয়া দুষ্প্রাপ্য হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট এ সম্বন্ধে আজ পর্য্যন্ত কোনও উপায় নিবারণ করিতে পারেন নাই। আমাদের খাদ্য নানা প্রকার থাকাতে একের পরিবর্ত্তে অপর একটীর ব্যবহার বরং সম্ভব হইতে পারে; যেমন ভাত রুটী না জুটিলে ৴।।০ সের আলু সিদ্ধ করিয়া খাইলে কিছু অল্প খরচে পেট ভরিতে পারে; কিন্তু বস্ত্রের পরিবর্ত্তে অন্য কিছু ব্যবহার করা চলে না। বাবা আদমের যুগ হইলে বস্ত্র সম্বন্ধে হয়তো কোন কথাই উঠিত না কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান সভ্য যুগে তাহা একেবারেই অচল। বল্কল পরিধানের কথা শুনা যায় কিন্তু কার্য্যতঃ তাহা সম্ভব নহে।

আমাদের দেশে কাপড়ের কলের সংখ্যা বেশী নহে। বাংলা দেশে মাত্র ১৫।২০টী কল আছে। প্রত্যেক কলের উৎপাদন ক্ষমতা খুব বেশী নহে এবং কোন কোন কলে মাত্র সূতা প্রস্তুতই হয়, বস্ত্র হয় না। বোম্বাই প্রদেশেই কাপড়ের কলের সংখ্যা বেশী। তাহা হইলেও সমস্ত কলের উৎপন্ন বস্ত্র সমস্ত দেশের অভাব পূরণ করিতে স্বাভাবিক সময়েই অপারক। বিদেশ হইতে এখন আর কোনও বস্ত্র আসিতে পারে না। জাপানের বস্ত্র, সূতা ও ছিট প্রভৃতি বন্ধ হওয়ায় বস্ত্রের বাজারে ভীষণ অভাব আনিয়া ফেলিয়াছে। যাহা কিছু উৎপন্ন হয় তাহার শতকরা ৫০ ভাগের বেশী সামরিক প্রয়োজন মিটাইতে যায়। আফ্রিকার কয়লা, মিশরের তুলা পূর্ব্বের মত সহজভাবে ও যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে আসে না। বাংলা দেশের কয়লা সামরিক কাজের জন্যই গাড়ীর অভাবে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে না পাওয়ায় কলগুলি পূর্ণভাবে চালান হয় না। বহু কল রাত্রির কার্য্য বন্ধ করিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছে। কল-কব্জা যাহা মেরামতী চলে তাহা চলিলেও নূতন কোন কলের অংশ আবশ্যক হইলে বিদেশ হইতে আনাইবার উপায় নাই। শ্রমিকদিগের অভাব অভিযোগের জন্য সময় সময় ধর্ম্মঘট, বহু শ্রমিকের স্থানান্তর গমন প্রভৃতি কারণে কলগুলি প্রচুর পরিমাণে বস্ত্র উৎপাদন করিতে অক্ষম। একে স্বল্প উৎপাদন তাহার উপর সামরিক প্রয়োজনীয়তার অখণ্ডনীয় দাবী পূরণ এই উভয় কারণে বস্ত্রের অভাব দিন দিন অত্যন্ত ভয়াবহ হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে। সূতা যাহা বাজারে পাওয়া যায় তাহার মূল্য চতুর্গুণ বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায় দেশী তাঁতিরা অর্থাভাবে কাপড় প্রস্তুত করিতে পারে না, বা করিলেও সুবিধা দরে বিক্রয় করিতে পারে না। তাই আজ ১।।০ মূল্যের ধুতি বাজারে ৮৲ টাকা দরে বিক্রী হইতেছে। আমাদের মত মধ্যবিত্ত

লোকদের যদি ৪।৫ জোড়া কাপড় কিনিতে হয় তবে মাথায় হাত দিয়া বসিয়া পড়ি। তাহার উপর চরখার সূতায় বস্ত্র প্রস্তুত করিয়া খদ্দর নামে যে অমূল্য জিনিস গান্ধীজীর কৃপায় বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠান মারফৎ বাজারে বিক্রীত হইতেছিল তাহাও Defence of India Rulesএর কবলে ও গভর্ণমেণ্টের বিষ দৃষ্টিতে পড়িয়া বন্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে। এই কারণে বাংলার প্রায় ১ লক্ষ লোক তাহাদের উপার্জন হইতে বঞ্চিত হইয়াছে। এতদবস্থায় সভ্য গভর্ণমেণ্টের অন্তর্ভুক্ত সভ্য সমাজের জনসাধারণের লজ্জা নিবারণ কল্পে আজ কি করিতে হইবে ইহার উত্তর কে দিবে?

বস্ত্রের এই দুর্ম্মূল্যতা স্বচ্ছল অবস্থাপন্ন ব্যক্তিদিগকেও যথেষ্ট দুঃখ দিতেছে। কিন্তু দেশের যারা অবস্থাহীন গরীব তাহারা কি করিবে তাহার উপায় কি আজ মন্ত্রী মহোদয়েরা বলিতে পারেন? মন্ত্রীদিগের অনেকেই সরকারী খরচে, সতর্ক প্রহরীর হেফাজতে অনেক সহর বাজার পরিক্রম করিয়া বেড়ান; কিন্তু সুদূর পল্লীর অন্ধকার মধ্যে কখনও কি শুনিয়াছেন তাহাদের মর্ম্মন্তুদ বেদনার কথা? দেখিয়াছেন কি কখনও তাহাদের ভিতর বুভুক্ষার নগ্ন ছবি? শুনিয়াছেন কি কখনও তাহাদের লজ্জা বিজড়িত নীরব ক্রন্দন? একটু মনোযোগ সহকারে শুনিলে শুনিতে পাইবেন তাহারা লজ্জা নিবারণে অক্ষম তাই চায় বস্ত্র, তাহারা অন্নাভাবে শীর্ণ তাই চায় অন্ন। চারিদিকে "মৈঁ ভুখা হুঁ; মৈঁ ভুখা হুঁ" শব্দ প্রতিধ্বনিত হইতেছে।

আমি জানিতে চাই আমাদের মা ও ভগিনীদের লজ্জা নিবারণের জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট কি করিতেছেন? আমরা নিজেরা কৌপীনবস্ত হইয়াও দিন কাটাইতে পারি, কিন্তু আমাদের মা ও ভগিনীরা কি করিবেন তাহার আশু ব্যবস্থা করুন। যদি না পারেন মন্ত্রিত্ব পদে ইস্তফা দিয়া আত্মমর্য্যাদা রক্ষা করুন।

আমাদের দেশে বহু তাঁতীর বাস, তাহাদিগকে সাহায্য দিয়া তাঁত-শিল্পকে সঞ্জীবিত করুন, খদ্দর প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলিকে মুক্ত করিয়া কার্য্য করিতে দিন, তুলা যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে আনাইয়া দিন। গান্ধীজীর চরকার মূল্য আজ প্রত্যেক মানুষ বুঝিতেছে। আমি গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অনুরোধ করি তাঁহারা তাঁহাদের prestigeএর কথা ভুলিয়া চরখা ও তাঁত-শিল্পকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করিয়া সকলের ধন্যবাদভাজন হউন। আমি নিজে গত ২ বৎসর হইতে বাজারে নিজের জন্য বস্ত্রাদি কিনি না। গত বৎসর জেলে থাকিয়া দৈনিক ৫ ঘণ্টা পরিশ্রম করিয়া ১৯ খানি বস্ত্র প্রস্তুত করিয়াছিলাম।

এই ভীষণ দুর্য্যোগে বস্ত্রের অভাব পূরণ করিতে অন্য কোনও উপায় আছে বলিয়া মনে করি না। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে কথাই বলুন আমি বিশ্বাস করি না যে সহজে তাঁহারা ইহার কোন প্রতীকার করিবেন বা করিতে পারেন। যদি কিছু করিতে পারেন তাহার চেষ্টা করুন এই আমার অনুরোধ।

এই কথা বলিয়া আমি আমার ছাঁটাই প্রস্তাব উপস্থাপিত করিতেছি।

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to discuss the policy.

The industrial policy of the Government as it is shaped now requires greater scrutiny. The plans and schemes that have been introduced leave ample room for progress. The end of war may not be the end of the period of sweat and tears for us. But India will be free and India's freedom should ultimately mean freedom from fear and want for her people. Our people

are the most want-ridden and, therefore, fear-ridden people of the world. Industrialisation is needed not because we want merely to substitute house-made products for foreign imports, but primarily because we want to give our people relief from the soul-killing struggle for the dearest subsistence. The most effective way of enabling our growing population to maintain itself until the necessary adjustment of our economic life can be carried out is to help them to produce for themselves as much as possible. They require initiative and enterprise of which the cottage workers themselves are not capable. This aspect of matters has not received any attention of the present Government. But this is a line of development which has to be tried. It will require co-operative unions, one of each group of eight or nine villages, which produce commodities for the needs of their own members. They should produce not only their own cloth, but grow their own vegetables, produce their own oil, honey, milk, ordinary articles of furniture, match, and a few other commodities. The details of an organisation for this purpose have to be thought and worked out, but it should have as its objects the conversion of available labour power into goods which can and should be consumed within the small co-operative units. Village markets are very limited and products of local industries cannot be disposed of in those local markets. Therefore, there should be an organisation to set up warehouses and marketing for the protection of the co-operative units. If the existing small and village industries now producing for the market are to be maintained and more are to be created, the State has to take measures for their protection and development. These industries have to be protected and, if necessary, to be subsidised and their technical problems solved for them; their products have to be standardised and sold and, what is most important the producers have to be given a square deal, in order that they may earn good wages and may not be overworked. In one word, the State has to aid all small scale and cottage workers. Special measures for the protection and development of small and cottage industries are needed because they hold and will continue to hold for a fairly long time an important place in our economic life. There may be various difficulties on their way of progress—the most important of these difficulties is that of finance. The amount of capital required for a small scale industry is too small to merit attention of the bigger capitalists; and banks also tend to show indifferences to the claims of the small scale industries. All this makes it exceedingly difficult to find capital for small scale industries, but the need for finance is urgent and undeniable. The only way this can be met seems to be by the creation of special industrial banks which will liberally advance working capital and capital for the purpose of improvement and extension of equipment to the small scale concerns. State aid in the form of loans awarded by the Department of Industries is not enough. It is only a banking institution run on business principles, but having the small scale industries at heart which can adequately perform this function. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak on this demand for grant, not so much for censuring the Government as to

make certain suggestions regarding the right policy which the Government should follow for the industrial regeneration of the province.

I have closely followed for some years past the activities of the Department of Industries and my intention today is to invite the pointed attention of the House and of the Government to the need for reorganising the department and for a reorientation of its outlook. As you are aware, Sir, this department originally formed a part of the Munitions Board set up during the last war, but a regular and permanent Department of Industries was sanctioned by the Government in 1920, and it was placed in charge of a Director of Industries. This was done on the recommendations of the Indian Industrial Commission who, however, wanted the Provincial Department of the Industries to function as a live body. But the recommendation of the Commission that the department should be reorganised and that its activities expanded was not acted upon on the plea of limited financial resources. This plea of the lack of adequate finance can, however, be no longer put forward for the inactivity of the department, as will appear from the increase in the total budget of the department from Rs. 4 lakhs in 1920-21 to Rs. 16·8 lakhs in the present budget.

The avowed object of the department has been the promotion of the industrial development of the province, and while large industries which do not presumably come within its sphere are strong enough to look after their own interests and can disregard the existence of the department, the same cannot be said in regard to the medium, small and cottage industries.

I would like to know what specific services have been rendered by the department for the development of the industries. In a monogram on "A Five Year Plan for the Industrial Development of Bengal," published in 1937, the present Director of Industries had emphasised the necessity of aiding the development of the minor industries of the province. Though, however, he had made some noise with his so-called Five Year Plan, nothing tangible has yet been done. In any case, I am frankly of opinion that the objectives visualised at the time of the creation of the separate department in 1920 are yet a matter of dreams and ideals. While before the war had started, the department had been following some routine affairs, it has now become a big contractor for the supply of war materials. Even this new form of activity has not enabled the department to justify its existence, as the object of the Government of India in placing war orders through this department was evidently to stimulate the development of cottage and small industries.

While on this point, I would like to draw special attention to a very peculiar order recently issued by the Government of Bengal, presumably under the inspiration of the over-zealous Department of Industries. The war, by withdrawing foreign competition, provided a brilliant opportunity for developing our sericulture industry and placing it on a stable footing. While, however, the department has been sitting tight over the recommendations of the successive Tariff Boards, for the development of this industry, it has lost no opportunity, in its anxiety to placate the Central Government, in placing one more noose round the neck of this industry.

Only recently, the Bengal Government by invoking the aid of the Defence of India Rules promulgated the Bengal Silk Control Order, 1942, and thereby secured the priority right to purchase silk from the producers or traders at prices fixed by the Government. It passes my comprehension why the price of silk of all things should be controlled. Silk is not such a thing like rice, *atta*, salt or kerosene, essential to the life of the community. It caters to the needs of the richer sections of the community who have greater buying capacity, while on the prosperity of this industry depends the well-being of a large number of people engaged in the production of silk which, as you know, is carried on the cottage industry basis. If the owners and workers of these cottage industries were getting a bit higher price for their products, we should not grudge them, least of all the Government should. But the Government thought otherwise and promulgated the Control Order, so that they might buy silk at a lower price for supply to the Government of India. The Government of India are spending 2 crores a day for the war. His Majesty's Government and other allied Governments are also making large war purchases in India. The payment of a little higher price involving in the aggregate a few lakhs of rupees to the growers, reelers and handloom-weavers of silk would have made the slightest difference to their huge war expenses. The Control Order, therefore, seems to be unnecessary and uncalled for and can be explained only by an uncanny desire on the part of the Director of Industries to supply silk to the Government of India at a low price that has led to the promulgation of the Order. Silk is not manufactured in Bengal alone. I would, therefore, like to know whether any such Control Order has been promulgated in any other province of India.

The war has dislocated many of our industries, especially in the matter of supply of raw materials and chemicals and coal and transport facilities. The difficulties have been more so in the case of smaller industries which are mostly unorganised and with which the children of the soil are more intimately connected. Big industries like jute, tea and coal are organised enough to keep their houses in order. They have sufficient resources too to manage their own affairs. But the same thing cannot be said of the smaller and cottage industries. Last year in course of the Budget Discussion I drew attention to this aspect of the matter. But I would like to know what the Government have so far done for the removal of these hardships. They ought to have foreseen such a situation. Even when their attention has been drawn to the probability of such a situation, they have not done anything appreciable to improve the situation. The department will not do anything on its own initiative, nor will it move when its attention is drawn to the things it should do. That the war would strain our railway transport system to the utmost was a foregone conclusion. Petrol rationing also made road transport difficult. It was therefore essential for the Government to devise ways and means for the development of inland water transport facilities for the incarriage of raw materials and outward despatch of finished articles. But what have the Government done? Again, I would like to refer to the matter of food-supply to the industrial population. The last air-raids on the city scared away the labouring classes. For a few days the industries were

paralysed as it were. Last year I suggested that the Government should maintain a Labour Registry, in order that labour may be transferred from areas where there is a surplus to areas where it is urgently needed. But where was the Department of Industries then? Did it ever enquire what were the hardships caused to the smaller industries by these raids? What attempts did it make for rehabilitating these industries?

As a matter of fact, the Government have absolutely failed in respect of its industrial policy or lack of industrial policy. They are indeed fighting shy of schemes of far-reaching consequences. The Government have no doubt appointed an Industrial Survey Committee as far back as 1938. It is desirable that this committee submit its report at an early date. Be that as it may, even the interim recommendations made by the committee, such as the formation of a Sugar Development Board, have not been given effect to. How long it will take the Government to come to any decision Providence alone knows. It is due to want of breadth of vision and imagination that the Government are unable to take any action on the recommendation of the Survey Committee. I only hope that the Government will take courage and implement them.

Lastly, before I resume my seat, I would like to refer to another aspect of the matter. It is well known to you that the war has placed the Indian industries in a quasi-monopolistic position by removing foreign competition for the time being. What advantage have the Government taken of this temporary protection? Indian commercial circles have also been pressing for a promise of post-war protection to those industries which have now been started to meet Government as well as civilian needs, if Indian industrialisation is to become a reality. I know that the determination of tariff and protection is a Central subject and as such beyond the purview of the Provincial Government. But under the Constitution Act of 1935 industries are a Provincial subject. The Government of Bengal therefore cannot completely shirk their responsibility in the matter. Although they have not the final say in the matter, certainly they have the right to place the public viewpoint before the Government of India. I should, therefore, like to know what have been the recommendations, if any, made by the Bengal Government to the Government of India in this matter.

Mr. BANKU BEHARI MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to say a few words with regard to Government's policy of coal industry with special reference to coal control. Every member of the House is aware of the abnormal rise of the price of domestic coal at Calcutta.

This abnormal rise of soft coke was due to Government's defective policy of coal control. I do not know if the Officer in charge of the Provincial Coal Control possesses knowledge enough about the problems of the coal trade and the intricacies of the movements of coal in the province. It is regrettable that he did not care to consult the Soft Coke Cess Committee or the coal organisations in this matter.

Sir, I come from the subdivision of Asansol where there are a large number of collieries and I have some first hand knowledge of coal industry.

In Calcutta stations the normal arrival of soft coke is about 10,000 tons per month and there are about 150 to 200 railway depôts in the city. The retail town depôt-holders draw their supply from the importing depôt-holders of railway siding. Due to the scarcity of wagons on account of military activities the price of coal began to rise and since January, 1943, Government took charge of coal control for civil requirements.

In Bengal the Director of Civil Supplies took charge of distribution of wagons to the depôt-holders and it was expected that provincial quota for coal would be distributed in an equitable way. But unfortunately the Officer in charge of Provincial Control distributed the quota in such an inequitable and indiscriminate way that it resulted in disorganisation of normal system of supply and hence the scarcity of coal arose. The other day the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca made a statement accusing the colliery-owners for the scarcity of coal in Calcutta, but he did not disclose the fact that in allocating quota to different depôt-holders, scanty regard was given to railway figures of import of soft coke wagons by the established depôt-holders.

Sir, the fact is that due to favouritism and nepotism of the Officer or Officers in charge of Coal Control a large number of new depôt-holders sprang up who had previously neither any coal business nor coal depôts. It was but natural that collieries hesitate to make contracts with these newcomers in the field of coal trade. Small collieries have also been affected by this indiscriminate distribution of wagons.

There is another side of the picture, Sir, the said Officer or Officers summarily cancelled the quota of several respectable depôt-holders of long standing reputation each of whom used to bring per month 100 to 150 wagons of coal to Calcutta without asigning any reason for such action.

Sir, before I resume my seat I earnestly request the Government—

(1) to make enquiry about the allegation of inequitable and discriminatory distribution of quota to the depôt-holders;

(2) to stop departmental corruption in the matter of distribution of wagons;

(3) to consult the Soft Coke Cess Committee and the representatives of coal organisations in fixing up distribution programme;

(4) to set up an Advisory Committee with the representatives of consumers and coal organisations to assist the Director of Civil Supply.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have only five minutes' time to speak on silk industry. Sir, recently an ordinance has been issued for the control of silk. The India Government did not think it proper to improve this industry for a pretty long time. In January, 1942, the India Government decided to purchase silk for military purposes mainly for making parachutes and for other purposes and there was a conference in January, 1942, when the price of rice was Rs. 8 a maund and then the conference thought fit to fix Rs. 15-2 per lb. In January, 1943, when the price of rice went up to Rs. 24 or Rs. 25, *i.e.*, three times, Government did

not think fit in the interests of the military that the price of silk should be increased. Sir, I do not suggest that we should not favour the military authorities with the supply of silk. The Bengal Government should adopt a policy ensuring supply of silk to the Government of India, but we are not prepared to allow the civil population, the agriculturists and the poor people to die and ask the Government to fix the price of silk at a rate lower than the market rate. Today's market rate of Murshidabad silk which Government require for military purposes is about Rs. 50 per lb. and still Government has not thought fit to increase the price from Rs. 15 to Rs. 50 per lb. The price is only one-third of the market price prevailing today. In Bengal there is a silk committee composed of members from the silk-growing districts, namely, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Rajshahi, etc., but that committee was not consulted. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is out of date.) That committee was not functioning then nor does it function now. The Industries Department is an autonomous body within the sphere of provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act, 1935, but it has never tried to improve the industries of the province.

Sir, we do not say that we do not want to supply silk to the military authorities, but it must be at a reasonable price. Let Government come forward and fix a price of rice at Rs. 8 per maund. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: They can't.) They are helpless, but whenever anything is required for the military, it must be taken and at a very low price and not at the market price. But when the civil population have to purchase things, they will have to do it at prices higher than the market prices.

Sir, we do not support this measure of Government. We appeal to the Hon'ble the Chief Minister—as the Hon'ble Minister in charge is absent today—to look into the matter and set up a committee with the members from the silk-growing districts to fix a reasonable price so that the interests of the poor growers are not hampered by this Government, otherwise it will not be possible for us to support this measure of Government. So I appeal to the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to look into the interests of the silk-growers of the province.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it is not my intention to deliver a long speech, but I think that I ought to make a statement on the question of policy to which reference has been made in the speeches delivered this evening.

Sir, I will take up the question of fisheries in the discussion of which specially my friend Mr. Walker has made a very useful contribution, and although his remarks have taken the form of condemnation by giving a list of what Government have not done, I think it is my duty to give a brief list of what Government have actually been able to do.

Sir, Bengalees are proverbially a fish-eating people and Englishmen also are great fish-eaters. Therefore, it is in the fitness of things that this subject should have been dealt with with such force and with such precision by my friend Mr. Walker. Scotchmen also are good fish-eaters and there is a great ring of fisheries all around Great Britain.

Now, Sir, the question of fisheries and the improvement of the fish industry has been engaging the attention of Government for a very long time. During my own lifetime, I have found several instances in which definite efforts have been made by Government to set up a Fishery Department if only for the purpose of increasing the supply of fish to the Calcutta market, but it so happened that the efforts that had hitherto been made have somehow or other proved futile. I thought that in this Department of Fishery there was a great possibility for Bengal, and I took the journey to Madras to study the question on the spot and we appointed a Madrassi gentleman, who was supposed to be one of the best fishery experts in India, to explore the whole position and to submit his report. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He recommended *Hilsa* fish for tanks!) In that case he made a mistake because they have not got *Hilsa* fish in Madras. Now, Sir, as soon as the report was received, we proceeded to set up that department. We appointed officers. I admit that that department has not yet been fully organised. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why has the scheme been abandoned?) The scheme has not been abandoned. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But no money has been provided.) I will tell you why. The scheme was adopted by Government just about a year ago and when we were going to set up this department in full, there came the denial policy which interfered very much with the movement of boats and we could not get fishermen to attend to their own business even, far less to take up the duty which we thought should be assigned to them if we wanted to make this experiment successful. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That was as a result of your own policy.) Running comments by Dr. Sanyal upset the link of my thoughts. So far as the details are concerned, the Minister in charge will give the House what we intended to do and what we could not do.

Sir, the whole point is that we have not been idle. We have been trying to bring experts from all parts of India and although we have not shown in the budget a big allotment, that does not mean that we are not prepared and that we will not be able to spend money as soon as we have a full-fledged department set up. We have not allotted a big amount because we do not know whether in these abnormal times we will be able to make much progress.

Sir, as the House is aware, there are three kinds of fisheries to which our attention will have to be directed. There is, first of all, the bay fishery or sea fishery, then there is river fishery and, lastly, the fishery in the Sunderbans. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Can't you make it a part of your "Grow More Food" campaign?) It must be a part of the "Grow More Food" campaign. It is not exactly true that we have not been doing anything, and we propose to go ahead and the suggestions that have been made by my friend Mr. Walker will be fully taken into consideration. We will see that we do something to remove the complaints made in the House. We will really do something substantial and we shall see that the supply of fish is increased. The reason why we do not get good fish and sufficient fish in the Calcutta market is that there are more men coming into Calcutta than we can bring fish into Calcutta. People are congregating here. Far from people running away from Calcutta in consequence of the air-raids, my own

experience is that more men are coming into Calcutta this year than there has been for some years past. The population here is increasing by leaps and bounds and it is very difficult to keep pace with the insistent demand for fish.

Then, Sir, there comes the question of iced fish. We do not get ice, particularly in those parts of Bengal where there is fish in abundance. This difficulty is going to be removed and arrangements will be made to supply ice so that iced fish may come to Calcutta from those places.

Then, as regards silk business, I am grateful to my friend Dr. Sanyal for having drawn our attention to the issues involved in the scheme for the improvement of silk industry adopted by Government based on a policy of control.

Now, Sir, I will not go into details, but it appears from the speeches that have been delivered by the leaders and the representatives of all sections in this House including the members from jute-growing districts that there is a great apprehension that the policy that has been adumbrated by Government may deny reasonable prices to silk-growers. That is not, Sir, a political question at all. It is a question of the silk industry, and on that point we can all agree that steps will not be taken which would hamper the industry in any respect. Sir, we are to supply silk to the Government of India for war purposes. We must, therefore, see that there is enough silk supply, and for that purpose we must take all the steps that should be taken in order to ensure that supply. It seems that the policy that has been adopted by Government does not commend itself to the majority of the members of this House. From that point of view we propose to examine the position. If it is found that it needs revision we will take steps to revise our decision in order to see that the difficulties that have been referred to may be removed. But if it is found that the control over the silk trade should be maintained during the period of the war for enabling supply of suitable quantities of silk for military purposes this Government will make every effort to ensure reasonable prices to the producers of cocoons and raw silk. For that purpose Government will consult the committee of technical experts, representatives of the silk trade and members of this House from the major silk-producing districts. In any case, Sir, I hope that the assurance I have given will remove all doubts as to our intention to secure favourable prices to the silk-growers subject to the supreme necessity of supplying silk for military purposes. The Minister in charge will make a full statement, and I do not propose to take any more time of the House.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the speeches made by honourable members regarding industrial development in the province of Bengal. I fully agree with them and Government also do agree that it is high time that the industry must be developed throughout the province and the province should be rapidly industrialised. Bengal being an agricultural province, we find that the pressure of population on the land is so heavy that unless we find out subsidiary occupations for agriculturist labour we shall be faced with starvation and it will be very difficult to save the people from a great

catastrophe. So it is by industry and the development of industry that we can supply subsidiary occupation to the cultivators, and the Government are trying their best to find out ways and means to explore new avenues to develop the industry. As you will see, Sir, the initiative is taken by Government. I must also say that it is not Government alone which can solve the problem absolutely satisfactorily. It requires the fullest co-operation of all sections of the general public, in order to take up cottage industry in rural areas of Bengal, and I hope the House will agree with me that simply blaming the Government and asking the Government to do something in this direction will not suffice. Honourable members have got responsibility on their shoulders to see that cottage industries may be started. Some such industries may be started if subsidiary occupation is to be given to both male and female population of this country in every household. Before referring to the various points raised by honourable members, I shall take up the question of silk industry and the control of silk, which I believe is under the serious consideration of almost all members of this House, and I find honourable members are agitated over this matter of the control of silk. So I would explain here why this control has been adopted, and what led both the Central and the Bengal Governments to adopt this control during the period of the war. For our own part, I am sure, this control was not introduced in Bengal before 1942, *i.e.*, before the Japanese actually entered into the war, and took possession of Burma and other neighbouring countries. Then it was the question of the defence of Bengal, and every-one thought that Bengal must be defended first before every other matter was considered, and it was with that end in view that the control was introduced as a war effort.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That was done not before but after the Japanese conquest of Burma.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That might have been done after the Japanese attack, but it was under consideration from before.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, we beg of the Hon'ble Minister not to bring in irrelevant issue and cloud the main issue.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am not clouding the issue, Sir. I am explaining the position. Regarding the control scheme, there is a general misconception about the real object underlying the move, in order to establish the industry on a secure and progressive basis. It is true that the controlled price is much lower than the prevailing market price, but I would request the honourable members to take a realistic view of the situation as it is and as it will be in the post-war period. Before the outbreak of the war the prevailing silk prices were far below the controlled price and there is no room for doubt that as soon as the war will cease and foreign competition will reappear, the prices will sag. So we are

to follow a policy which may secure to the silk-workers substantial benefits out of the war and at the same time safeguard them against the precipitous depression in the post-war period. We shall have to take into consideration such steps and we will allow price to rise to a certain extent.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Can you prevent the rise in price of any other commodities?

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, please put your question to the Hon'ble Minister after the conclusion of his speech.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The second objective may be achieved only if we can (*i*) improve our productive machinery as also the quality of our products, and (*ii*) capture a larger market than we had previously. It was to achieve these ends that we decided to accept the offer of Rs. 9 lakhs from the Government of India for the improvement of silk production in Bengal through the machinery of adequate organisation and to control silk prices. By this decision we are going to achieve a substantial expansion and improvement of our silk industry from the stage of cocoon-rearing to the stage of silk-reeling and thus lay a secure foundation for the future stability and progress of the industry in all its aspects. We have already achieved considerable improvements in the organisation for effective cocoon-rearing and now under the present scheme in operation with the help of India Government funds, it will be possible for us to develop the filature industry to a sufficient extent so as to produce standardised silk for the international market. I may state for the information of the House that nothing but graded and standardised silk has and will have an effective demand in the international market and this was the most serious drawback from which the industry suffered. Now under the new organisation, Bengal has begun to produce superior quality of standardised silk which is commanding a steady demand not only in this country but also in the British and other foreign markets. Since the British Government have given us a definite understanding that they will receive our entire production at stipulated prices during the war and even one year after the war, it means that our silk industry has now an assured international market for a period which may extend to years and also enters upon a very welcome period of steady growth and improvement.

As to control of prices referred to by my friend, Dr. Sanyal, viz., Rs. 15-2, it is not correct. The Government of India has been moved to raise the price according to the cost of living standard of the cultivators or growers, and I can make a statement that prices will be raised and that cultivators, growers and labourers will be saved on that account. Of course the stipulated price cannot be allowed to rise higher at this stage. Silk is essentially necessary for parachute cloth and other war materials.

As for holding the Conference we will consider that point later. Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you got anything more to add to what has already been stated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Khan Bahadur?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, Sir.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he sticks to the assurance given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Certainly I do.

The motion of Mr. J. N. Gupta that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Sarat Chandra Mukherjea that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was put and lost.

Mr. J. R. WALKER: In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. J. R. Walker that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Mr. J. C. Gupta that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to my motion (No. 26) I follow the lead of my friend Mr. Walker and beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Mr. Hafizuddin Choudhuri that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that the demand of Rs. 17,83,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman that a sum of Rs. 17,83,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Industries" was then put and agreed to.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

43—Industries—Cinchona.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 12,25,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona."

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 12,25,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the schemes for increased production of quinine and cinchona cultivation.

Sir, at this fag end of the day and with hardly any time at our disposal all that I would like to state in moving this motion is that we want the Hon'ble Minister in charge to give us an account of what the Bengal Government is doing in regard to the extension and rapid extension of cinchona cultivation and the increased supply of quinine for the province of Bengal.

Sir, we have seen off and on certain Press reports about negotiations that this Government had with the Government of India in this connection. These reports have given us the impression that the interests of Bengal have been sacrificed in some important respect in coming to an understanding or agreement with the Government of India. We would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge a full account of the position and also we would be delighted to hear from his lips the assurance that, so far as the minimum quota for a malaria-stricken province like Bengal goes, he and his Government will ensure adequate supply of quinine for this province. I feel, Sir, that in the matter of extension of cultivation of cinchona all that could be done has not been done and is still not being done, although on this we have on previous occasions given detailed and definite suggestions as to how improvements could be effected. There are two directions in which such improvements are urgently called for. The first is by the introduction of what is known as the Russian method under which within a short period of three years we can get sufficient growth of all classes of cinchona plantation from which fairly good production of quinine may be obtained. The second important direction in which improvement is urgently called for is by permitting the plantation of cinchona on private enterprise. I am sure, Sir, that if cinchona is not kept under control and if the production of cinchona is encouraged through private enterprise, there would be large increase in the production of cinchona in the province, particularly within the large areas that many

tea gardens have arranged to keep within their jurisdiction. Sir, the time has come when bold and drastic steps should be taken.

I am also aware of another direction in which Government attention should be directed, namely, the possibility of substitutes for quinine, but that is a matter which will come really under the Medical Department and we shall direct our attention to that department when the time comes.

I would like through my cut motion a complete statement of the policy of Government to be laid before the House, so that we may and the country may ascertain how far the present Government has been maintaining a policy of providing maximum supply of quinine for the malaria-stricken parts of this province.

With regard to the distribution of quinine, I would not take up that question here. That is a matter probably under the "Public Health" budget which we would deal with in due course. Today, Sir, we would like the Hon'ble Minister in charge to give us an account of at least the provincial quota of distribution on an all-India basis which we believe comes under the jurisdiction of his department.

With these words, Sir, I move the motion standing in my name.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 12,25,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government in the matter of supply of quinine and in the matter of putting a stop to the practice of profiteering going on without interruption.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, আমাদের দেশে সাধারণতঃই ব্যারাম ও রোগ লাগিয়া আছে। কত যে বিভিন্ন মূর্ত্তি ধরিয়া ব্যাধি আমাদের সম্মুখে উপস্থিত হয় তাহার হিসাব করা কঠিন হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। তন্মধ্যে ম্যালেরিয়াই সর্ব্বাপেক্ষা প্রবল কিন্তু চিরসঙ্গী। এই কষ্টারোগ্য ব্যাধি কবে যে কুটুম্বের মত আসিয়া কুটুম্বের মত থাকিয়া গিয়াছে তাহা নিরাকরণ করা শ্রমসাধ্য। এই ম্যালেরিয়া যে আমাদের কত সর্ব্বনাশ করিতেছে এবং করিয়াছে তাহার ইতিহাস অতি দীর্ঘ। ম্যালেরিয়ার একমাত্র ঔষধ যে কুইনাইন ইহা সর্ব্ববাদী সম্মত। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান সময়ে সেই একমাত্র ঔষধটি Radium-এর মত দুর্ম্মূল্য ও দুষ্প্রাপ্য হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। অন্ন-বস্ত্রের সাথে সাথে ঔষধও মহাজন পথ অবলম্বন করিয়াছে। আমাদের সদাশয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট সর্ব্বক্ষেত্রে একই নীতি পরিচালনা করিয়া হাত গুটাইয়া বসিয়া আছেন। পোষ্ট অফিসে আর কুইনাইন পাওয়া যায় না। পল্লীস্থ Dispensary গুলিতে, ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট বোর্ড লোকাল বোর্ড ও ইউনিয়ন বোর্ডের মারফতে যে পরিমাণ কুইনাইন সরবরাহ করা হইত তাহার পরিমাণ কমিয়া গিয়াছে। চতুর ব্যবসায়িগণ এই সুযোগ গ্রহণ করিয়া প্রভূত পরিমাণে অর্থ উপার্জ্জন করিতেছে। কিন্তু আমাদের সদাশয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট এবং তাহার প্রতিনিধি মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী অচল অটলভাবে নির্ব্বিকার হইয়া বসিয়া আছেন। আজ পর্য্যন্ত ইহার কোন উপায় করিতে পারেন নাই। সমস্যা ঘনীভূতই হইতেছে, মীমাংসার কোন সুযোগ নাই। ভাঙা গিয়াছে, কুইনাইন আসে না। বিদেশী কুইনাইন পূর্ব্বের মত সমুদ্রপথে যাতায়াত করিতে অক্ষম। সিনকোনা চাষ বাড়াইবার জন্য কিছু করা হয় নাই। কাজেই যে পরিমাণ কুনাইন আছে ও আসিতেছে তাহা ধনী ব্যাবসায়ীদের কবলিত হইয়া অগ্নি মূল্যে বিক্রীত হইতেছে।

রাজস্ব-সচিব সেদিন এক প্রশ্নের উত্তরে গভর্ণমেণ্টের কুইনাইনের মূল্য ২৫।।০ পাউণ্ড একথা বলিয়াছেন। যদিও আমি জানি যে সেই দরে এক গ্রেণও কুইনাইন পাওয়া সম্ভব নহে। গতকল্য কলিকাতা সহরে Quinine bisulphate ২৪২৲ এবং Quinine byhydrate ২৯৫৲ পাউণ্ডে বিক্রীত হইয়াছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট তাহার কঠোর গাম্ভীর্য্য লইয়া নীরবভাবে বসিয়া মৃত্যুর ছায়াবাজী দেখিতেছেন ও মনে মনে হয়ত প্রভূত আনন্দ উপভোগ করিতেছেন। বস্ত্র ও অন্ন সমস্যার মত কি কুইনাইন সমস্যাও সমানভাবে অমীমাংসিত হইয়া থাকিবে? সাধু হইবার বশবর্ত্তী হইয়া বিদেশী ঔষধপত্রেও কয়েক জন দমনকারী অর্থাৎ Controller নিযুক্ত হইয়া সরকারী বেতন ভোগ করিতেছেন। মধ্যে মধ্যে ২।১টি ক্ষেত্রে জরিমানা ও অন্যরূপ শাস্তি-ভোগের ব্যবস্থা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু কার্য্যতঃ কিছু ফল দেখা যাইতেছে না। আইন ও শৃঙ্খলার নামে যদি পুলিসের সাহায্যে বিদ্রোহ দমন করা সম্ভব হয়, ফৌজের সাহায্যে যদি যুদ্ধে জয়লাভ করা সম্ভব হয়, জীবন-মরণের সঙ্গী ঔষধপত্র লইয়া যাহারা জুয়া খেলিতেছে তাহাদের দমন করা কি সম্ভব হইবে না? জনসাধারণকে বাঁচাইয়া রাখিবার যে নৈতিক দায়িত্ব গভর্ণমেণ্টের উপর ন্যস্ত তাহা কি ভুলিয়া গিয়াছেন? আমি অনুরোধ করি আমাদের প্রিয় বন্ধু মন্ত্রী মহোদয়গণ একটু সজাগ হইয়া মনঃসংযোগ করুন, সুবুদ্ধিসম্পন্ন দায়িত্বশীল ব্যক্তিদের সহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া কোন উপায় নির্দ্ধারণ করুন। নিরপরাধ দেশবাসীকে বাঁচিতে দিয়া কর্ত্তব্য পালন করুন। আমরা মনে করি বস্ত্রহীন হইয়া অন্নাভাবে ক্লিষ্ট হইয়া বিনা ঔষধে রোগ শয্যায় মৃত্যুর জন্য অপেক্ষা করা অপেক্ষা বিমানচ্যুত বোমার আঘাতে মৃত্যু বরণ করা সহজ এবং অভিপ্রেত।

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, much has been said about the scarcity of quinine at the present moment. I should like to draw the pointed attention of the House about the pitiable condition of the poor private medical practitioners in the mufassal. Some time ago I remember —it is about six months back—I represented the case of some practitioners of my constituency practising in the mufassal villages to the highest authority in Writers' Buildings about the scarcity of quinine. At about that time they were buying quinine at about Rs. 200 per pound in the market. I brought the matter to the notice of the authorities and they gave me the hope that the matter would be considered. I saw them once again and then they assured me that the case would be considered after some time. Then I got an official letter from Writers' Buildings asking me to advise those practitioners to apply to the Collector of the district, assuring me that the Collector would be in a position to supply them with quinine because sufficient quantity of it had been placed at the disposal of the Collectors of the districts. On the authority of that letter I advised my friends to apply to the Collector. I remember this was about three months from now. But it is astonishing that no action has been taken on those petitions. They are getting no reply, they are getting no advice or no quinine in spite of repeated *takids* as to whether they will get quinine or not.

Sir, we are perfectly aware of the condition of the private practitioners in the mufassal that without quinine, specially in the time of malaria, it is very difficult for them to carry on with their profession and to help the people in distress. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge, in view of the assurance that we got from the authorities of Writers'

Buildings, whether the Collectors are really in a position to give quinine to the practitioners at controlled price. If it is yet available there, we may take necessary steps to advise the practitioners in our constituencies to act accordingly.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me first answer the points that have been raised by my friends Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherji and Mr. Serajul Islam.

Sir, it is known to everyone in this House that after the fall of Java there had been scarcity of quinine not only in Bengal but throughout India. So, the Government of India called a conference and in that conference it was decided that the stocks that had been purchased by the Central Government before the fall of Java and the productions of the provinces of Bengal and Madras would be pooled together and the total stock would be allocated throughout India. It was also decided in that conference that considering the stock that was in hand and that was to come year after year in the hands of the Central Government, only 75 per cent. of the normal consumption of the past three years would be allocated to each province and state. After that certain schemes had to be made and the Government Quinine Rationing Scheme was only published in Government Order No. 4397 A.R.P., dated the 23rd November, 1942. According to that scheme the Government of Bengal went on allocating according to the respective consumption quota of quinine for districts by instalments. The first instalment of 5,000 lbs. was allocated to the District Officers on the 31st December, 1942; the second instalment was distributed on the 11th February and the third instalment was given on the 18th February, 1943. The third instalment of 12,876 lbs. was the biggest quota allocated to districts and no complaint has yet been received after that about the shortage of quinine. It is our estimation that there would be no shortage of quinine in any district for the coming two or three months. All the complaints that have been made on the floor of the House relate to a time previous to these allocations. I hope, Sir, that after the district authorities have selected the retail dealers in the union boards and towns, the difficulty that is now being felt as regards the supply of quinine will be very much minimized. Of course, as there is shortage of quinine all around, some difficulty will be felt, but not to the extent as had been experienced before the third allotment.

Sir, as regards doctors, it has been felt by Government to be very difficult to allot every doctor with any amount of quinine as there are so many doctors in the province. But doctors are free to prescribe medicine with quinine as quinine can be had from the retail dealers selected by the district authorities. That is all that we can do under the circumstances. We shall have to go on with this shortage and improvise schemes as circumstances permit. Of course, the allocation part of the scheme has now been transferred to the Public Health Department, and I shall place the difficulties of the doctors, if there be any, and ask the Public Health Department to enquire into the matter thoroughly and if they can help them in any way or if there be any better solution, I shall ask them to look into it.

As regards the main points raised by Dr. Sanyal, I shall reply one by one. He wanted a kind of rapid extension of cinchona plantation. Evidently, he means the Russian planting method. I may say for the information of the House that the Russian method is nothing but planting the plants more thickly than we have actually been doing up till now. There is no separate class of species, as Dr. Sanyal has said in his speech. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have not said that.) You said about a separate class. There is no different class or species for the Russian method. It is the same plant, but we have to plant them more thickly. Under the ordinary method, we plant cinchona plants 4 ft./4 ft. apart and under the Russian method we have to plant 2 ft./2 ft. So we shall get four times the number of plants by the Russian method in the same area. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How many varieties?) Perhaps that question does not arise.

Sir, I may tell this much for the information of the House that the Government of India requested us to extend the area of our cinchona plantation by 700 acres more than our normal plantation.

Sir, I shall place a few facts for the information of the House about the stupendous nature of the task of building up nurseries. In order to plant 700 acres by the Russian method, we require 56,000 nurseries, each 6 ft. by 5 ft. This means a total of 38·58 acres in the form of prepared nursery beds. Not only that. The nursery beds cannot be selected unless there is assurance of continuous water-supply. For that purpose we had to wait until the rain was over and there was great difficulty in selecting the nursery sight. Our present view from general experience is that nursery to that very great extent is very difficult to find out, but we are trying our very best. And although we may not be able to fulfil the scheme of extension of 700 acres we shall come very near to that figure.

Apart from the difficulties of selecting nursery sites and of finding out proper sites, there are other difficulties about building materials. One of such materials thought suitable for the purpose is *golpata*. We require 2,02,000 maunds of *golpata* and we tried to get it from the Sundarbans, but the military authorities did not allow us to get it from there, and we have to think of other materials.

Then there was the difficulty of securing labour. We require at least 4,000 more labourers for the Russian method of plantation alone.

Sir, in spite of all these difficulties the managers, the assistant managers and the superintendent of cinchona plantations have worked hard and have given us an assurance that they will be able to complete the plantation of about 660 acres.

Sir, it was an arduous task and we have tried to do our utmost in this direction. I hope we shall be successful in planting about 700 acres by the year 1944. At present we are building up nursery structures and going on with that work as fast as we can.

The next point that has been raised is that we have sacrificed the interest of Bengal in that conference to which I have already referred.

I shall place facts to repudiate that charge. Up till now the cinchona plantation of Bengal was producing 45,000 to 50,000 lbs. a year. Under the agreement that has been entered into not only by Bengal but also by all the provinces in India we are to get 75 per cent. of our normal consumption. Our normal consumption has been estimated at 90,000 lbs. a year. This year we have got 75 per cent. in the reserve field and 18,000 lbs. in our unreserved field for 7 months. By calculation we find that we have got 75 per cent. or the full quota. Now, if we consider that we have got 75 per cent. of 90,000 lbs., it will be evident that we are getting more than we produce up till now.

In the current year we are of course growing more because we are exploiting some of our overmature plantations, and we shall get 60,000 lbs. We expect to get as much in the coming year, but after that we shall not be able to maintain that pace and our production will decrease. So, if we take a long-term view it can be said that we have gained by that agreement and have lost nothing by that.

Then, Sir, Dr. Sanyal has referred to private enterprises. Up till now we have got only two offers from two companies. The terms of one company was such that no Government could concede to. Besides, there is one initial difficulty. Suitable lands for cinchona plant is so limited that we cannot give up any land from our own plantation area; there might be lands elsewhere, but it is very difficult for the department to say whether that land will be fit for cultivation. It has been proved in our departmental experiments that at a particular place after the plant has thriven for two or three years suddenly it deteriorates and dies out. So we cannot give any guarantee to any third person whether any particular piece of land in any part of the province will be suitable for cinchona cultivation. There are lands available and if the companies themselves examine those lands, start their own plantations there, we can make arrangements to give such lands to them for cinchona plantation and also help them with seeds, but we cannot undertake to give them any sort of financial guarantee or otherwise help them.

As regards the question of securing a substitute of quinine, I may inform the House that the Government of India, realising that there is a most acute shortage of quinine, have placed orders with America for Atebrin. The latest news that we have got from the Centre is that America is ready to supply us with 80,000 lbs. of Atebrin as we wanted from them. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is that quantity meant for Bengal?) No, that is for the whole of India. When we will get that I hope we shall be able to induce the Government of India to allot a bigger quota than has been decided at the conference. This is the position, Sir, and it will be evident that the department has done all that could be done.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about the Shaw Wallace's distributing contract which has been terminated?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The contract has been terminated.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why did not you take credit for that? Has the contract been completely cancelled and that Company's business in quinine completely stopped?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Last year we supplied 50 per cent. of the quota to Shaw Wallace and Company because of shortage of quinine and there was some outstanding quota that was due to that Company. They will finish selling that quantity by the 30th March and if there is any quantity still left out, they have decided to hand it over to Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, my question is that we understood that by the time Shaw Wallace's contract was terminated, whatever stock of the undelivered quota Shaw Wallace had will be taken into account and there will be either payment of a compensation to them for the loss of commission that they had suffered or quinine would be supplied to them instead. Am I to understand that instead of terminating the contract straightaway involving, if necessary, payment of commission, Government allowed supplies to be continued even after the contract was terminated, thereby permitting Shaw, Wallace and Company to sell quinine in the market at an exorbitant price after the latter part of September?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, the position is that the contract really was determined in September but, as I have already said, we supplied Shaw Wallace with 50 per cent. of our agreed quota and so they had the right to ask for the remaining 50 per cent. for sale. We took legal advice and our advice was that Shaw Wallace had the right to enforce that contract because it was on our asking that they consented to take less supply, that is, 50 per cent. less supply than they were entitled to. We could compensate them, but that would have done this province no good financially. So we supplied them the rest that was due to them, and as soon as they have sold off that quota their contract will terminate.

As regards price, I may tell my friend Dr. Sanyal that the allegation that Shaw Wallace had sold at high prices is absolutely baseless. We fixed the price and under the contract they could not go over that price. The price of Shaw Wallace is Rs. 37 per lb. and we also from our Government Quinine Depôt are selling it at that price.

As regards the high price of quinine in the market, it is certainly not Government quinine. It is quinine imported before the fall of Java by third persons, and we have no control over it. I think that has been practically exhausted by now, and the Government quinine will be the only quinine in the market.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: The Hon'ble Minister stated that the District Magistrates have been given the authority to distribute quinine in selected districts. Are we to understand that the practice of placing quinine at the disposal of post offices for sale is going to be discontinued?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, that is so.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: The Hon'ble Minister said that the medical practitioners in villages might prescribe quinine and that quinine would be available locally. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to inform this House whether arrangements have been made by Government to appoint agents in each union to sell quinine on behalf of Government, and if so, whether it is a fact that after the agents had been appointed the District Magistrates again issued orders directing those agents not to dispose of the quinine until further orders, and my last question is whether the District Magistrates have withdrawn this last order prohibiting the agents from disposing of quinine and whether quinine is now being available from the agents appointed by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, that is an information which cannot be answered straightaway without enquiry, but the position is that the District Magistrates have been authorised to select retail dealers and sell quinine through their agents.

The motion of Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherji that the demand of Rs. 12,25,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 12,25,000 for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman that a sum of Rs. 12,25,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "43—Industries—Cinchona" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-40 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Wednesday, the 17th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 17th March, 1943, at 3-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 154 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Compensation paid to the ejected tenants of Khasmahal lands at Kalimpong.

***161. Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the names of the Khasmahal tenants of the 14th mile, Kalimpong subdivision;

(*ii*) the acreage of lands acquired belonging to each of them; and

(*iii*) the compensation paid to them by the Government?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the method adopted by the Government for paying compensation to the tenants for the Khasmahal lands resumed by the Government?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the tenants of the 14th mile were ousted from their lands where they had been staying for two or three generations?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting adequate compensation to the tenants?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE and JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Library Table.

(*b*) Principles of compensation have been laid down in Appendix XIII of the Crown Estates Manual, 1932.

(*c*) Some of the tenants were holding the land for over one generation. Out of 24 tenants only six had huts built on them.

(*d*) Adequate compensation has already been granted according to the rules.

(*e*) Does not arise.

Jurors of the Rangpur district.

***162. Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that there is no arrangement by Government for the lodging and boarding of the jurors attending the sessions courts in the district of Rangpur; and

(*ii*) that the jurors have often to put up in the same public hotels along with the parties concerned?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Government have no information.

(*b*) The matter will engage my attention.

Debt Settlement Boards in Nator subdivision.

***163. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number and names of Debt Settlement Boards that are at present functioning within Nator subdivision;

(*ii*) the number of cases pending in the respective Boards;

(*iii*) the number and names of Debt Settlement Boards that have been abolished within Nator subdivision; and

(*iv*) the number of cases which were pending for decision in the respective Debt Settlement Boards before their abolition?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the records of the Kalam Debt Settlement Board have been destroyed?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date of destruction; and

(*ii*) the steps the Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS and AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) No, the records were stolen.

(*c*) (*i*) The date of the theft—17th September, 1942.

(*ii*) The Board has begun to reconstruct the lost cases.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 163.

Serial No.	(*i*) Names of Debt Settlement Boards now functioning.	(*ii*) Number of cases pending with each Board now functioning.	Serial No.	(*iii*) Names of Debt Settlement Boards abolished.	(*iv*) Number of cases pending with each Board at the time of abolition
1	Madhnagar ..	74	1	Brahmapur ..	12
2	Khajura ..	58	2	Halsa ..	36
3	Sukash ..	71	3	Baraharishpur ..	16
4	Dahia ..	221	4	Tebaria ..	33
5	Italy ..	111	5	Chhatni ..	32
6	Kalam ..	*	6	Dighapatia ..	34
7	Churamanbati ..	66	7	Bipra Belgharia ..	30
8	Chamari ..	89	8	Patul ..	30
9	Sherkole ..	70	9	Kafura ..	79
10	Singra ..	51	10	Hatiandah ..	4
11	Chowgram ..	31	11	Jamnagar ..	21
12	Chhatardighi ..	158	12	Arbab ..	24
13	Ramanandakhajura ..	334	13	Bagatipara ..	78
14	Panka ..	50	14	Lalpur ..	18
15	Joari ..	63	15	Gouripur ..	77
16	Duari ..	54	16	Walia ..	13
17	Nagar ..	78	17	Chongdhupail ..	29
18	Bamankola ..	141	18	Dayarampur ..	108
19	Dharabarisha ..	163	19	Chandipur ..	95
20	Nator Special ..	212	20	Chapila ..	87
21	Gurudaspur Special ..	76	21	Chowmuhan ..	39
22	Nator Co-operative Special	580	22	Gurudaspur ..	67
23	Lalpur Special ..	122	23	Nazirpur ..	14
			24	Beaghat ..	32
			25	Majhgaon ..	32
			26	Gopalpur ..	134
			27	Bilmaria ..	24

*Kalam Debt Settlement Board is reconstructing the lost cases. It is not possible to give th figure at present.

Appointment of Forest Officers from the Muslim community.

***164. Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge c the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statemer showing—

(*i*) the present number of—

(1) Foresters,

(2) Deputy Rangers,

(3) Rangers,

(4) Senior Rangers, and

(5) those in Indian Forest Service; and

(*ii*) the number of Muslims in each category?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of Rangers that have recently been promoted to the Gazetted rank; and

(*ii*) how many of them are Muslims?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rules are maintained in these services?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*e*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of appointing Muslims to the vacant posts as required under the Communal Ratio Rules?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) (*i*) Three.

(*ii*) None.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Does not arise.

(*e*) The Communal Ratio Rules are followed in making direct recruitment to the Subordinate Forest Service.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 164.

Name of service.	Total number of officers.	Total number of Muslims in each category.
Subordinate Forest Service—		
(1) Foresters	212	35
(2) Deputy Rangers	59	10
(3) Rangers	74	13
(4) Senior Rangers	2	..
(5) Indian Forest Service	15	1

Grant of seed loans on "Sawai system".

***165. Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to lay a statement on the Table showing for the current financial year—

(*i*) the total amount granted to the agriculturists under the "Sawai system" for seeds; and

(*ii*) the amount granted to the different districts?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any amount has been given to the Darjeeling district?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*d*) Are the Government considering the desirability of granting seed loans to the district of Darjeeling this year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Room for expansion of the area under paddy in the district of Darjeeling is small.

(*d*) Yes; of vegetable seeds.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 165.

(*a*) (*i*)—Rs.10,60,833-5-6.

(*ii*)—The district figures are shown below—

		Rs.	a.	p.
1.	Rajshahi	42,016	10	3
2.	Malda	25,873	0	9
3.	Dinajpur	41,724	4	6
4.	Pabna	8,632	11	3
5.	Bogra	15,953	0	3
6.	Rangpur	62,819	10	6
7.	Jalpaiguri	23,523	0	9
8.	Dacca	70,610	0	0
9.	Mymensingh	1,35,839	4	6
10.	Tippera	65,908	10	0
11.	Chittagong	772	4	3
12.	Noakhali	47,865	11	9
13.	Bakarganj	68,282	11	0
14.	Faridpur	5,688	8	0
15.	Howrah	35,661	13	9
16.	Hooghly	31,022	5	6
17.	Jessore	72,104	1	3
18.	Khulna	31,600	14	0
19.	Murshidabad	41,956	7	3
20.	Nadia	26,753	8	0
21.	Bankura	76,507	14	0
22.	Birbhum	42,859	1	0
23.	Midnapore	43,381	1	6
24.	Burdwan	43,476	11	6

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the reason for such a small grant to Khulna which is declared to be a surplus district as compared to the district of Bakarganj which is given Rs. 68,000?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: This loan or grant was made on the requisition of the District Officers. Of course, it might be that Bakarganj has got a larger amount than Khulna, but as there

was no necessity and no demand from Khulna, Government did not feel any necessity for supplying any larger sum.

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the 24-Parganas have been left out from the list?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Because no loan was distributed there.

Starred Question No. 168.

(After starred question No. 168 was called.)

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: If I am to answer for the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca I shall have to ask for further information from the department. Up till now I have not been able to elicit any additional information except the question and the printed reply thereto. I request you to hold over the question till the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca comes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We protest against this, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your protest is recorded, but it is unfortunate that things like this should happen. If the Hon'ble Minister says that, what can I do?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: You will see that Government is forced to make some arrangements.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will again ask the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to see that things are managed properly.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the Parliamentary Secretaries used to give answers when the Hon'ble Ministers had not been able to give them. May I suggest that you will see that the Parliamentary Secretaries give these answers as previously?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will ask the Chief Minister.

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Recommendation of the Special Officer on Fatka market.

51. Maulvi MD. ISRAIL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to give effect to the recommendation of the Special Officer on Fatka market within 1943?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when and in what shape it is to be given effect to?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Following up the recommendations contained in Professor Todd's Interim Report Government asked him to undertake a further enquiry into the actual working of the Jute and Hessian Futures markets from March to December, 1942,

when both markets were open. From his Second Report embodying the results of that further enquiry it was clear that the original enquiry into the Futures markets is only part of a much wider enquiry into the whole marketing organisation of the Jute Trade both in Calcutta and in the mufassal. Professor Todd is now preparing a further report on the whole position. Meantime both Jute and Hessian Futures markets have been moribund since January, 1942.

Under these circumstances Government feel that it would not be advisable at present to undertake a comprehensive and far-reaching scheme for the reorganisation of the whole marketing system of the Jute Trade. Any such scheme must await the return of more normal conditions, probably after the War.

In the meantime, however, there are a number of minor reforms which would go far to remedy the worst abuses of the former Futures markets and which could be undertaken at once by the authorities of the two Exchanges on their own initiative. The attention of the responsible bodies has been drawn to these matters and should they show no willingness to take appropriate action the Government will have to consider the whole position very carefully, if any proposal is made to reopen either of the Futures Exchanges.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

XVII—Irrigation, etc.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 48,13,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation—Working Expenses—18.—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Ordinary Revenues—18(1).—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Famine Insurance Fund—19.—Construction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works—B.—Financed from Ordinary Revenues and 68.—Construction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works."

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on reduction under "Contour Survey—North Bengal."

Sir, after the debate on food problem lasting for full four days, I shall try to be as brief as possible.

In area, Rajshahi Division is about a quarter of the province and possesses probably the best land also in the province. Owing to her geographical position having the Himalayas to the north, the Jumna and the Padma to the south and east and to some extent to the west she has somewhat peculiar needs and problems which require serious attention. She has her *bils* with stagnant water to be drained out; dried up and dying rivers to be resuscitated and last but not the least and the most important is her flood problem which on an average destroys half the produce of her soil every

year. If permanent *bunds* with a few sluice gates are constructed at certain places and lock gates at the entrances of a few streams and rivulets much of this kind of destruction will come to an end.

Every district has a few local projects and there are also a few inter-district ones. Pabna has as much as six such projects with plans and estimates ready under the Bengal Sanitary Drainage Act hanging for the last 22 years. In some preliminary expenses were incurred and guage reading gone through with money contributed by villagers. One of these projects, namely, construction of a lock gate at the entrance of Kinu Sircar's *jola* was fortunate enough, at my intervention, to get an allotment in the budget for the year 1938-39 but the expert opinion, at the end, stood in its way and it was decided that without a contour survey of the whole division, anything done would be "technically unsound".

Accordingly an estimate of Rs. 3,80,000 for contour survey was prepared and sanctioned and about Rs. 25,000 was first provided in the budget for the year 1940-41. And up to the end of 1941-42 as much as Rs. 59,821 was spent for the purpose. A sum of Rs. 40,000 was also provided in the current year's budget. But to our great surprise this was reduced to a paltry sum of Rs. 1,100 in the revised and the net result was that no progress could be made in this direction during the current year. If the Government and the party it represents, had the slightest imagination and courage and was really progressive in character, then instead of reducing the grant it should have increased it up to the amount of the estimate less the amount already spent and completed the survey before the year was over. This would have given them an opportunity for tackling, at least, some of the projects whose plans and estimates are ready with such modifications as would appear to be necessary after the survey during the coming year. Money could well have been provided with borrowed capital, if not available from ordinary revenue and realised with interest from the District Board under the Sanitary and Drainage Act, who in turn would realise the same from those benefited. That would have immediately solved the food problem to a great extent and within a few years Rajshahi Division could be made the granary of Bengal by tackling the whole thing in right earnest in accordance with the recommendation in the Survey Report. According to Mr. Cordell Hull, the war is going to be a long-drawn-out one and hence it is reasonable to suppose that Burma rice cannot be made available for several years to come and as such it has become incumbent on us all to make Bengal a self-supporting province so far as her food problem is concerned.

It is indeed regrettable that this has escaped the notice of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the Government and the party he represents. How a paltry sum of Rs. 16,500 could be provided under this head for the coming year when there is so much acute food problem in the country? No question of want of building materials can arise here as Rajshahi Division has ample supply of *babul* and tamarind trees for the manufacture of bricks and *sal* and *shishu* for wood works, and these are the materials required for construction of sluice gates and lock gates.

Sir, I always come with some constructive suggestions. In the general discussion I pressed for a Land Alienation Bill but got no response from the Hon'ble the Finance Minister. Now here is one. Let us see the result.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. SARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJEA: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.," be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on postponement of the Muir Scheme and also insufficiency of water-supply by the Bakkeswar Canal.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, বীরভূম জেলায় উপর্য্যুপরি দুর্ভিক্ষ ও অজন্মার কথা গভর্ণমেণ্টের অজানা নয়। কেননা প্রত্যেক বারেই রিলিফের জন্য বহু টাকা দিতে হইয়াছে। পূর্ব্ববঙ্গ যেমন নদীবহুল এবং তথাকার স্থানীয় জমিগুলি যেমন সরস, পশ্চিমবঙ্গে ঠিক তার বিপরীত। পূর্ব্ববঙ্গে বন্যার জন্য সাধারণতঃ শস্যহানি হয়, আর পশ্চিমবঙ্গে জলের অভাবে অজন্মা হইয়া থাকে। কোনও রকমে আবাদ করিতে পারিলেও সেচের পুষ্করিণীগুলি মজিয়া যাওয়ায় এবং স্থানে স্থানে জমিদারগণের লোলুপতা ও অভাববশতঃ সেগুলি জমিতে পরিণত হওয়াতে আবশ্যকমত জলসেচনের অভাবে আবাদ-করা শস্যগুলিও অকালে মরিয়া যায়। আমাদের কেবলমাত্র বৃষ্টির জলের জন্য প্রতীক্ষা করিয়াই চাষ আবাদ করিতে হয় এবং উহার অভাবে (যাহা প্রায়শঃই হইয়া থাকে) খাদ্যাভাবে কষ্ট পাইতে হয়। প্রায় ২০ বৎসর পূর্ব্বে বক্রেশ্বর নদী হইতে একটি ছোট canal প্রস্তুত হইয়াছে। ইহার দৈর্ঘ্য ১৫।১৬ মাইলের অধিক নহে এবং ইহা হইতে কোন শাখাপ্রশাখা রচিত হয় নাই। স্থানীয় নদীগুলি সাধারণতঃ শুষ্ক হইয়াই থাকে। উপরে জল হইলে বর্ষার সময় বন্যা আসে ও সেই সময়েই canal এ জল পূরণ করিতে হয়। সুতরাং ব্যাপকভাবে জলাভাব হইলে canal জল দিতে পারে না। তথাপি দেখা যায় canal সংলগ্ন জমিগুলিতে প্রায়ই অজন্মা হয় না। তবে খাজনার হার বেশী হওয়ায় চাষীরা উৎপাদনের তুলনায় লাভবান হইতে পারে না। এই canal টিকে আরও পরিবর্দ্ধিত করিলে এবং বৃষ্টি ও বন্যার জল রক্ষা করিতে পারিলে আরও সুবিধা হইতে পারে; কিন্তু এ বিষয়ে গভর্ণমেণ্ট আজ পর্য্যন্ত অত্যন্ত উদাসীন। এ দিকে মনোযোগ না দিলে জেলায় শস্যাভাব চিরস্থায়ী হইয়া থাকিবে। ১০।১২ বৎসর পূর্ব্বে সাঁওতাল পরগণার সহিত সংযোগ করিয়া ময়ূরাক্ষী নদী হইতে একটি সুদীর্ঘ canal করিবার কল্পনা হয়। ইহার নাম 'Muir Scheme'। রায় বাহাদুর আর. এম. সিংহ যখন ঐ জেলার Irrigation Executive Engineer ছিলেন তখন তাঁহার আমলে এই পরিকল্পনাটি প্রস্তুত হয়। তিনি উক্ত পরিকল্পনাটি গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট উপস্থাপিত করিয়া আজ ৪ বৎসর সরকারী কার্য্য হইতে অবসর লইয়াছেন। আমরা যতদূর জানি উহা mature হইয়াই আছে। উক্ত canalটি প্রস্তুত হইলে বীরভূম জেলায় এমন কি মুর্শিদাবাদ জেলায় পর্য্যন্ত যথেষ্ট জলসরবরাহ করিতে পারিবে। আমার মনে হয় বীরভূমকে বাঁচাইতে হইলে ইহাই একমাত্র উপায়। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় আজ পর্য্যন্ত এ বিষয়ে গভর্ণমেণ্টের সম্পূর্ণ ঔদাসীন্য প্রকট হইয়াই আছে।

জলসরবরাহ কৃষির একমাত্র ভরসা। যথেষ্ট জলের ব্যবস্থা না হইলে চাষ করা অসম্ভব। একমাত্র জলাভাবেই আমাদের জেলার দৈন্য দিন দিন বাড়িয়া চলিতেছে। প্রতিবারে রিলিফ

ওয়ার্ক করিয়া বহু অর্থব্যয়ে সাময়িকভাবে সাহায্য দেওয়া হয় মাত্র, তাহাতে কোনরূপ স্থায়ী উপকার হয় না। জলসরবরাহের সুব্যবস্থা না থাকিলে 'grow more food' পরিকল্পনা উপকথার মতই থাকিয়া যাইবে।

বীরভূমে যে কয়টি নদী আছে সবগুলিই বারমাস আহাদের শুষ্ক বক্ষ উন্মুক্ত করিয়া চিরদারিদ্র্যেরই পরিচয় দিয়া থাকে। বছরের মধ্যে কয়েকদিন মাত্র বন্যার কারণে সরস ও উৎফুল্ল হইয়া উঠে মাত্র।

আমি জানি গভর্ণমেণ্ট ইহার উত্তরে বর্ত্তমান যুদ্ধ ও অর্থাভাবের কথা তুলিয়া আমাদের সান্ত্বনা দিবেন, কিন্তু আমি জানিতে চাই যে জনসাধারণকে বাঁচাইয়া রাখিবার নৈতিক দায়িত্ব কি গভর্ণমেণ্টের নাই? যদি তাহা থাকে তবে অতিপ্রয়োজনীয় কার্য্যে অবহেলা বাঞ্ছনীয় নহে। এতদিন যে টাকা scarcity ও famine এর সময় খরচ করা হইয়াছে তাহা যথাসময়ে স্থায়ী বন্দোবস্তকল্পে ব্যবহৃত হইলে বারে বারে টাকা ব্যয় করিতে হইত না।

চিরাচরিত গড্ডালিকা প্রবাহের মত সরকারী কার্য্য নিরুপদ্রবে সম্পাদিত হইতে পারে বটে, কিন্তু জনসাধারণের পক্ষে তাহা যে মোটেই কল্যাণকর হয় না ইহা ধ্রুব সত্য। আমাদের বর্ত্তমান জীবনমরণের সন্ধিক্ষণে মাননীয় জলসরবরাহ সচিব মহাশয়কে অনুরোধ করি যদি আমাদের বাঁচাইয়া রাখিবার ইচ্ছা তাঁহার থাকে তবে যত শীঘ্র সম্ভব আমাদের জেলায় বক্রেশ্বর ক্যানালটিকে পরিবর্দ্ধিত ও সংস্কৃত এবং "ময়ূর scheme"টিকে কার্য্যকরী করিবার জন্য সচেষ্ট হউন। উক্ত পরিকল্পনার জন্য বিহার গভর্ণমেণ্টের সহিত যে মতান্তর হইয়াছিল আমি জানি তাহা মিটমাট হইয়া গিয়াছে। পরিকল্পনাটি প্রস্তুত হইয়া সেরেস্তাখানায় নীরবে পড়িয়া আছে। এই অপূর্ব্ব সুযোগে তিনি ইহাকে কার্য্যকরী করিয়া তুলুন এবং এজন্য জেলাবাসীর ধন্যবাদ অর্জ্জন করুন।

এই কয়টি কথা বলিয়া আমি আমার ছাঁটাই প্রস্তাবটি পরিষদের অনুমোদনের জন্য উপস্থাপিত করিলাম।

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, would you kindly permit me to move my motion? I was just outside near the demonstration.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the postponement of work in connection with the Bidyadhari-Peali Scheme and other beneficent irrigation projects and curtailment of survey operations.

Sir, few words are necessary to draw the attention of this House and particularly of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to the great harm that is likely to be caused to the province by any postponement of beneficent irrigation projects. While generally this is true, it is more so in the case of the Bidyadhari-Peali Scheme on which depends not merely the prosperity of a very large tract to the south of Calcutta but also the drainage of the city of Calcutta itself.

The House may be aware, Sir, that for years past this question had been engaging the attention of Government and of the experts of Government

and both the Public Health Department as well as the Irrigation Department have been in possession of details of the scheme for more than five years now. Sir, this scheme is bound up with the Tollygunge Flood Scheme under which Rs. 75,000 was proposed to be advanced by the Provincial Government in case the Tollygunge Municipality undertook to advance certain sums of money to have certain measures to protect the flooded areas of Kasba within Tollygunge Municipality. This scheme is also bound up and intimately connected with the Calcutta Corporation Drainage Outfall Scheme and my esteemed friend, Mr. P. Banerji, has been for the last quarter of a century fighting for the improvement of the Adi Ganga with which also this scheme is closely related. In spite of all our efforts not for one or two years but for nearly a quarter of a century we find the position remains as before. It is a very unfortunate state of affairs and I respectfully submit that such a state of affairs must be brought to an end. Mere drawing up of schemes will not help the country and if it is stated that the scheme cannot be proceeded with because of war conditions I fail to understand what materials would be required to dig up our sacred mother earth with a number of labourers who would use no other material than mere spades. It would require no dredger or chemicals or stone or cement and yet we are faced with a situation that this scheme has to be abandoned because of the supreme difficulties due to war conditions. We might require just a little cement and a few bricks to have one culvert here or lock gate there constructed and I believe we have sufficient materials of that type yet available for undertaking important beneficent schemes of this character. I am also inviting your attention and the attention of the House not merely to this scheme but to the abandonment of many other larger schemes. Sir, the "Muir" Scheme on which Dr. Mukherji has just spoken has been abandoned now. The resurrection scheme for the entire Central Bengal which was for some years the talk of the Cabinet and the Ministry appears also to have been abandoned. Sir, the then Hon'ble Minister in charge, Maharaja Sris Chandra Nandy, of Cossimbazar, held out high hopes, contour survey was undertaken and we thought that something was going to be done to improve the position in Nadia, Murshidabad, Jessore and Khulna districts. But nothing of the sort appears to have been done.

On the contrary, Government have, just in order to shirk the responsibility from their shoulders on to the shoulders of local bodies, introduced a new policy of decentralization for smaller schemes about which at the stage of introduction I pointed out that it would not succeed because local bodies have no experts to help them and they have no funds to proceed with. In spite of that the experts of Government advised that that was the best method to absolve Government of the direct responsibility in these matters. And, Sir, we now find that that policy has practically led to no improvement of the countryside. I am also in this connection impelled to invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to the serious difficulties that may arise if survey operations of North Bengal area are suspended, as appears to be suspended from the records of the budget. I am afraid that even if schemes cannot be undertaken survey operations must not be postponed because otherwise we may not have data enough ready in course of time

even after the war when things will improve and we may have an opportunity of taking up these things. I therefore submit that Government would do well not only to carry out such of the schemes which are found to be extremely necessary but also to carry out the survey operations with a view to getting prepared to take up such schemes as and when better times come.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Khan Sahib MOFIZUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this cut motion to raise a discussion about the failure of Government in the matter of the Gumti embankment in Tippera.

Sir, whenever I think of the Irrigation Department I at once remember the Gumti embankment in the district of Tippera. The Gumti embankment is no longer a local matter only. It has crossed the bounds of local interests and assumed the character of an all-Bengal problem. But unfortunately for us stupendous is the failure of the Government in this respect. There have been agitations in the press and platform. The poor unfortunate agriculturists have cried themselves hoarse. Speakers after speakers have exhausted their lungs in the Assembly House for the last 6 years, but Government have systematically neglected the problem most criminally. Sir, one can little imagine what a tremendous loss is suffered by the unfortunate and helpless people living on the northern side of the Gumti. Breaches in the embankment have been a matter of annual recurrence. Breaches affect a vast tract of land covering two parganas, viz., Gangamandal and Bardakhat. Floods brought in by the breaches in the embankment totally destroy crops worth lakhs of rupees. These ravages of the Gumti have compelled many people to leave their ancestral homes and to take shelter in the jungles of Hill Tippera and Assam. This year, Sir, owing to the havocs committed by the Gumti three thanas, Burichang, Devidwar and Muradnagar, are in the grip of famine. A large number of people cannot have one square meal daily. Many people are starving. Hundreds of people are available to work as labourers in exchange of a morsel of food only. Many are sure to die of starvation. This is the appalling situation raging there. Sir, I need hardly narrate further tales of harrowing distress and miseries engendered by the Gumti.

Sir, is there no remedy for this? Is it a problem of such magnitude that the Government cannot cope with? I fail to see the justification of maintaining the white elephants of the department and also of the existence of the Government if they cannot find a solution to this problem. Sir, last year when the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department went to Comilla a representation was made to him by the distressed people. He gave an assurance to the people that he would give succour to the millions of suffering people. But it now appears that he, too, is not lagging behind his master who gives assurances only to break them and who has by now got this notoriety that his words are not to be taken with a grain of salt. Since the assurance was given one year and more has elapsed and much water has

flown down the Gumti and all other rivers of the world. But has the Hon'ble Minister given any thought over the hard lot of the flood-stricken people of Tippera? Excuses are very often set up to the effect that these schemes are expensive. But may I remind the Ministry, through you, Sir, that the country can no longer tolerate their shilly-shallying policy? The Chief Minister can expand his Ministry to any number he likes for the solidarity and cementing of his unholy combination and can spend lakhs of rupees on that score but money gets absolutely dried up when the question of any mass ameliorative scheme comes in. Sir, this is the irony of fate. The people have to fill in the coffers of the Government but when their life-and-death problems are at issue Government comes forward with the lame excuse of insufficiency of funds or the want of a scheme.

The Irrigation Department has been systematically following a policy of inaction, leaving the people of the province to their fate. As a result the matter has come to such a pass that the people are brought to the last verge of ruination. If any definite and effective measures be not adopted by the Government to fight this menace, I am sure the people on the north of the Gumti will ere long be totally ruined. I make a definite charge against the Government that they have signally failed in tackling the Gumti embankment matter. If the Ministry is unable to discharge the trust reposed in them, they must vacate.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the repairs and reconditioning work of damages to irrigation *bunds* and the Anderson Weir.

Sir, it may be noticed from the present budget that large sums had to be spent this year due to the damages caused by the cyclone and otherwise. Through this motion I want to invite the attention of Government, and in particular of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, to the fact that complaints have reached our ears regarding the selection of contractors in connection with this work. It has been stated—and I am stating with great moderation today because I am not feeling inclined to create any heat—there is so much heat outside—it has been reported to me, Sir, that persons in high office had gone out of their way to send for the Executive Engineers and recommend parties from outside. What has been the inducement for doing this, I am not at the present moment aware, and even if I had been aware I would not place that before the House, but, Sir, it has been very much commented upon that persons who have been long in the list of approved contractors for the particular area and were left to take charge of such work, not merely of new constructions but repairs as well, as and when they came along and who were prepared to take it up, were not entrusted with such work where, as you may be aware, Sir, large profits were likely to be made. In the case of repairs work the profit sometimes is so enormous that it is extremely difficult to keep a proper check on the same, and therefore it is all the more

necessary that greater scrutiny should be exercised in the selection of contractors. Sir, that is one charge which I, at any rate, would not like the present Hon'ble Minister in charge to permit getting wide currency. There may be other Hon'ble Ministers in charge against whom complaints of this character have been freely made, but so far as the present Minister in charge is concerned I sincerely hope that he will see that nothing is allowed to be done which may even indirectly cause his reputation to be at stake.

Sir, with regard to the Anderson Weir, there is another aspect of the question to which I want to invite the attention of Government. This Anderson Weir was constructed possibly with expert advice, but, Sir, we are now faced with repeated demands on provincial funds for keeping this weir under good repairs. It appears to me that there was something essentially wrong in the planning of the whole thing and I feel that this is one of the very good instances in which big irrigation projects ought not to be undertaken without proper examination and guidance. I am inclined to feel that if the Hydraulic Research Laboratory was established in Bengal much earlier it would have been very much easier for us to get expert advice for projects of this character and much loss of public revenue could have been prevented. Unfortunately, although we had repeated assurances for some years now, the nucleus of the office of the Hydraulic Research Laboratory has only been established just recently and I feel that unless we get definite information from the expert whom the Hon'ble Minister has now imported and who has been entrusted with the study of these questions, no money should be spent on the repairs of the Anderson Weir. There is of course one great trouble that if the weir is not repaired before the monsoon sets in and volumes of Damodar flood begin to rush down, there may be difficulty in getting proper repairs made later on. I am fully conversant with that and that is all the more reason why there should be an immediate attempt to get proper data on the possibilities of the repair work. I submit that the attention of the expert in Hydraulic Research work should immediately be drawn to this question before anything else is taken up.

With these words I commend my motion for acceptance.

Demonstration in the Assembly compound.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to bring to your notice that a large number of ladies stricken by hunger has assembled outside. So, may I suggest that we should go and hear the grievances of those people and the House may be adjourned for 10 minutes?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I entirely agree with the proposal and if the House agrees, I have no objection.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest that the House should be adjourned for at least half an hour. A very big crowd is there and a good many children too, and the Chief Minister as well as leaders of the parties should be there to address this crowd to induce them to go away——

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Go away empty-handed?

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: No, we have to give assurance, we have to make arrangements, but our presence there is necessary. We cannot attend the House just now and not in a mood either. Therefore, I beg of you, Sir, to adjourn the House for half an hour.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to hear the Muslim League Party.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We have no objection.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there any objection from the European Group?

Mr. C. MORGAN: What is it about?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A suggestion has been made by the Congress Group and the Muslim League Group that the House should be adjourned for half an hour to meet the demonstration outside. If it is the intention of the House to adjourn I can do that. Is there any objection from any group?

(There was no objection.)

The House stands adjourned for half an hour.

(The House was accordingly adjourned for half an hour.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is with great regret that I have to bring to your notice that outside there is a very serious demonstration owing to the scarcity of rice in Calcutta. I understand a reference has been made. We would like, Sir, at this stage, to discuss this matter, so that a solution may be arrived at as early as possible. We think, Sir, that the Ministry ought to tell us what steps it is taking to relieve the situation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, really it is a serious matter and I will advise you to move a relevant motion permissible under the rules in consultation with the Speaker. Let us now carry on with the programme.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

XVII—Irrigation, etc.

Maulvi Kazi ABUL MASUD: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion about the adequate provision not being made for drainage of the Bhadra Bil (silt clearance of the Narad river, district Rajshahi).

Sir, the river Narad within Rajshahi district is in moribund condition. So far as the silt clearance of the Narad river from the Kasundia *jala* to the junction of Nandakunja is concerned the river bed has become high at Salikha and its neighbourhood and to deepen the bed for the purpose of draining out water a scheme was taken up by the Government at an estimated

cost of Rs. 36,453. Government wanted local contribution to the extent of one-third of the entire cost and in response to Government's demand the Rajshahi District Board by its resolution, dated the 30th September, 1939, has allotted the sum of Rs. 12,000 for this purpose. But of this allotment the Rajshahi District Board has generously contributed the sum of Rs. 8,000 to the grant. Sanctioned estimate of Government is Rs. 24,453. The work has been undertaken by Government in January, 1941. In the year 1941-42 Government has spent Rs. 7,039. In 1942-43 there was a provision of Rs. 17,500 under this head, but this year Government has spent Rs. 5,300 only. During more than 2 years there has been expenditure to the extent of Rs. 12,339 but deducting Rs. 8,000 which has been contributed by the District Board, Government has spent only Rs. 4,339 out of the sanctioned estimate of Rs. 24,453. The project is so very important that it concerns about 100 or 150 villages within 5 unions, namely, Tebaria, Dighapatia, Halsa, Harispur and Kafuria of Natore thana. Due to the failure of Government to put in execution of this so important a scheme during the long period of more than 2 years 6,000 *bighas* of lands remain under water even in the month of Chaitra. People cannot sow the lands in time and even if they can sow with great difficulty the sweat of their brow does not produce any desired result. There has been failure of both paddy and *rabi* crops for several years. There has been starvation and death of men and cattle. Failing to meet the rent and other liabilities due to failure of crops for successive years the people of these villages have been reduced to day-labourers. Wheels of the present Government run slowly but wheels of this particular department are moving slower still. The department has been inefficiently staffed and patronage has been extended to incapable and inefficient persons holding responsible jobs.

In consideration of the time, labour and money spent appreciable progress has not been made. When it was brought to the notice of the Executive Engineer, Nadia River Division, on the 28th November last, the precious gentleman holding princely job was kind enough to send a reply on 22nd February, 1943, about a couple of months after and the relevant portion of the reply runs thus:—

"Lastly as regards the re-excavation of the Narad river, it may be mentioned that owing to heavy rise in the price of articles and of labour, it is not possible to take up this work with ordinary sanctioned rate of earth work; so, it has been proposed to keep it in abeyance until the normal time returns."

This Engineer made a mess of the whole thing and due to his miscalculation and misdirection there has been waste of public money. Experienced local contractors are quite willing to undertake the job with much lower rate and if a reasonable sum is provided to them they would be able to finish the whole work within the next financial year.

In this connection Government's reply is very much disappointing. The reason of delay in executing the scheme has been given in so many words that "the slow progress of the scheme is due to the emergent condition created by the war, on account of which labour could not be procured except

at exorbitantly high rates. Sometimes high rates are given with the connivance of the unscrupulous and dishonest Engineers." True that the rates have been enhanced to a certain extent but because of the enhanced rate if the Government does not intend to carry on, it would mean ruin, destruction, starvation and death.

In spite of the fact that there was a provision of Rs. 17,500, only Rs. 5,300 has been spent last year and even in this year's budget the unspent amount of Rs. 12,200 has not been provided. Only there is a provision of Rs. 10,000 under this head. In the name of untold misery of the millions of people, in the name of suffering humanity I want a definite assurance from the Hon'ble Minister that the Government is determined to put the scheme into execution by the end of the next financial year.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of my motion is to raise a discussion with regard to the callousness on the part of the Government in the matter of irrigation works which have been indispensably needed for ensuring better cultivation on which 90 per cent. of the population of the province have been thrust for their living.

Sir, Bengal is an agricultural province. Nearly 90 per cent. of the population have been thrown upon land for their livelihood. Improvement of the province means the improvement of cultivation. But, Sir, improvement of cultivation is closely related to the development of irrigation of the province. Cultivation is entirely dependent upon water-supply; unless land is watered cultivation and sowing is not possible; crop cannot grow well. But we in this province have got very poor arrangement for watering our lands. Cultivation of the province is severely handicapped by lack of irrigation facilities. With few exceptions in West Bengal we are to depend upon the rain for supply of water for cultivation. If it rains in time, cultivation is good; abundant crop is expected; otherwise failure is sure and certain.

Drought and flood are considered to be some of the main causes of failure of crop in the province. But, Sir, with the solution of the drought problem other problems are sure to be mitigated. If the cultivators get supply of necessary water, they can sow in time, grow their crop in proper order to stand against flood or any other natural calamities.

I do not mean here major irrigation schemes which are sure to be encountered with difficulties of various types. But I desire to urge upon Government the policy of framing and carrying out smaller ones which may be feasible with much less difficulty and objection. There may not be possibility for further canal irrigation over the greater part of the province but there are possibilities for smaller schemes and the cultivation of *rabi* crops may be greatly enriched by them. In the Punjab and the United Provinces the irrigation work is carried out in the areas where no canals

have been existing by Persian wheels and ordinary wells from which water is drawn up by bullock power. We find no reason why this sort of arrangement should not be introduced in Bengal. There is also possibility of extending irrigation works by tube-wells and portable pumps, the utility of which will be confined to the areas bordering rivers and *beels* which are abounding in this province.

Sir, in this connection I desire to speak a few words about drainage work which is considered to be indispensably necessary in the matter of extending cultivation of the province. In some parts of the province vast tracts of land have been lying waste without cultivation on account of their lower level and in other parts in *beel* areas of the province enormous lands remain under water during the major part of the year and they can be easily brought under cultivation and thereby can be made fruitful source of crops by introducing drainage system there without causing any inconvenience to the neighbours. Here I may mention the case of the district of Pabna which is my home district in North Bengal which has been totally neglected in the matter of irrigation work by the Government. There are several *beels* extending over vast tracts of land in Sadar subdivision. Drainage arrangements may be made there at a much less cost by constructing small canals connecting those *beels* to the nearest rivers without causing any inconvenience to the natural free flow of flood water or inconvenience of the neighbouring places there and that will bring about not only vast cultivable lands but also at the same time destroy the malarial germs of the locality. In this connection I request Government to take up two cases at least as an experiment—one is the case of Garulia *beel* in Atgharia police-station and the other is the case of Nalua *beel* in the police-station Faridpur. In both the cases small channels are to be constructed to drain off the accumulated water to the river Cheknai which is not far off from the place. That will bring a major part of the land under cultivation and at the same time people will be protected from malaria.

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Dr. SANAULLAH: Sir, I rise to make a few observations in order to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, to the Dhurangkhal re-excavation scheme. The actual work of re-excavation commenced last year, but unfortunately, it was all on a sudden stopped. The Zemindar Minister of the previous Government, the then Hon'ble Maharaja Sris Chandra Nandy, was good enough to go all the way to Chittagong and to sanction adequate money for the purpose. But it is an irony of fate that under the Krishak Proja Minister this scheme was suddenly and abruptly postponed. Sir, we do not find any co-ordination in the policy of the Ministry. We find that the Ministry is carrying on agitation for "Grow More Food", but whereon can we grow more food if the necessary lands are not reclaimed by pushing up drainage and irrigation schemes? We are spending lakhs on "Grow More Food" scheme, but at the same time we are curtailing expenditure on minor drainage and irrigation schemes.

Sir, the Dhurangkhal re-excavation scheme is only a minor scheme requiring only about Rs. 26,000. If the work is not finished, the money already spent will be practically wasted as the House can well imagine that the portion that was excavated last year has already been silted up. This year also they have started after much pressure from the local inhabitants. I have drawn the attention of all concerned in the department from the Chief Engineer down to the Subdivisional Officer and of the Hon'ble Minister also both informally as well as in writing, to this scheme and I sincerely and earnestly hope that the same thing will not be repeated this year also and that the excavation of Dhurangkhal will reach its culmination this year so that Chittagong may be saved from starvation. By the completion of this scheme, I think about 64 square miles of land will be made cultivable. As the House is well aware, Chittagong is practically in war zone and there is a great scarcity of foodstuffs there. Rice is selling at one seer per rupee—that is the latest report.

There are also many other minor schemes, and work in connection with these schemes may be speeded up now with the help of the large number of Burma evacuees who have flocked to Chittagong as a result of enemy occupation of Burma. I may inform the honourable members that the schemes relate to Barguni Khal, Hungor Khal and others by giving effect to which schemes much useful work will be done.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, it may be out of place for me to take part in the discussion on the Irrigation Budget——

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: To the microphone, Nawab Sahib.

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: It would not be necessary.

After the dramatic announcement of the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister following the speech of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that all lands and all rights to land above that of the *bargadar* and *adhiar* will be practically confiscated by Government, I think we have no place on earth where we can go and live. That being the present state of affairs, I know that my friend, the Irrigation Minister will at once say, what business have you to speak on the improvement of land when we are going to take away the land from you and turn you out of Bengal because you have no right to keep any land in Bengal.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not including the tea gardens, of course, which will remain with you!

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I am not speaking now on behalf of the tea garden owners but voicing the sentiments of those for whom I have come here. So far as the tea gardens are concerned, there are other honourable members who will ventilate the grievances at the proper time of tea garden workers. Here, Sir, I represent those people who own land in the country which is proposed to be acquired by Government by the new legislative measure. I may be out of place now but still as long as we are allowed to live in Bengal I want to say that irrigation has been

neglected and neglected all along in North Bengal. When I was a Minister I asked the Government to provide Rs. 5 lakhs for the contour survey of North Bengal. Government accepted my proposal. Work was actually started and about Rs. 69,000 was spent in one year. About one-half of Jalpaiguri was surveyed but we do not know what has been the result of that survey, after which a scheme was to have been drawn up for the irrigation of North Bengal——

Khan Sahib Maulvi JASIMUDDIN AHMED: When?

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Two years ago.

But since then, as far as I know, the question has been dropped and the scheme has been shelved at the stage at which we left it. It is said that Rs. 1,000 has been spent on it the following year but what for I do not know. That being the case, Sir, I say that this is a wrong which has been perpetrated by my friends who are now carrying on the work. We have been told to grow more and more food in the country, but I ask, how can you grow more food unless you have a land of your own and that land improved by means of irrigation and manuring?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: You grow more and more tea, Nawab Sahib!

Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I may grow more and more tea but that will help neither you nor the people of the country, and unless something is done to improve the land with a view to growing more food on the land there is bound to be repeated demonstrations like the one we have here today. But this sort of tomfoolery that is now being carried on will not do any more. I ask my friends who are on the Treasury Benches today to think of every part of the country and not of West or Central Bengal only. North Bengal has been neglected and criminally neglected in the past and if that is also done in future I warn them that it is they only who will be held responsible for that state of affairs. Sir, we want improvement of land in every part of the province no matter whether the land is enjoyed by one set of people or another. Sir, in these days of scarcity we want our food and if Government would not do its duty to the people, let that Government resign. That is what I should like to tell my friends over there to do. I ask them also to take a note of what I have said today and see that every part of Bengal is properly irrigated.

Mr. PUSHPAJIT BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, agriculture of this province entirely depends on monsoon. But human being has no hand whatsoever over it. Agriculturists look helplessly for it during the time of cultivation. Irrigation work can help the cultivators in this direction. Irrigation is one of the most important factors that can help the cultivation work most. North Bengal has practically been neglected of having the favoured look of this department. Irrigation, embankment, drainage work and flushing scheme are practically unknown in North Bengal. The districts of North Bengal entirely depend on rainfall for their cultivation. They generally suffer from excessive rainfall or excessive drought. The districts of extreme North Bengal generally suffer from want of sufficient

rainfall. Flood is generally unknown to the people of the three neighbouring districts such as Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Dinajpur while the people of the other districts of the lower part of North Bengal generally suffer from flood due to rainfall; the people of the upper North Bengal generally suffer from want of rainfall. Now, Sir, what is bad for the lower part of North Bengal is good for the upper part of North Bengal and *vice versa*. This contradictory and diverse situation can only be controlled by irrigation work.

Sir, so far as the three neighbouring districts such as Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Dinajpur are concerned, there are immense facilities for irrigation, embankment and drainage work. Generally the lands of these districts are in higher level than the lands of the other districts of the province. The soil is generally sandy. And the sandy soil soaks the water of the land very soon. The rivers that pass through these districts carry silt with their water—the silt which is a most important natural manure for cultivation. But the cultivators of the districts of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Dinajpur cannot utilise this manure due to the high banks of the rivers. The waters of the rivers cannot enter into the agricultural fields on both sides of the river. Sir, the districts of extreme North Bengal are full of dead and dying rivers. These dead and dying rivers were the off-shoots of the big rivers of these districts.

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Sir, I would like to speak a few words.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, I have a motion standing in my name and I would seek your permission to speak on that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Shahedali and Mr. Mridha, I am sorry that there is absolutely no time that can be spared for you. I have already called upon the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed to make his reply. I will have to finish the discussion on this budget by 5-15 p.m.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been criticism made on certain aspects. In my speech which I will just now deliver I have practically in anticipation dealt with almost all the points raised by honourable members in their speeches.

I will at the outset only mention about the contour survey of North Bengal. I can only say this that on account of the paucity of staff this contour survey had to be stopped, and the moment we get back the staff from the sea-dyke works and other works I will certainly take up the contour survey first of all. I can remind my honourable friend Nawab Musharruff Hossain that whether North Bengal was neglected in the past or not, that is a matter which he knows best, but in future it will have my closest attention.

Sir, in moving this demand for the irrigation grant I feel I must remind the House that this budget has been framed under the stress and

strain of the present war. It is essentially a war-time budget and carries with it the imperative limitations of such a budget. The financial implications of the war vis-à-vis the budget as a whole and in several essential respects have already been touched upon by my worthy colleague, the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and Minister for Finance, and I do not want to waste the valuable time of the House by traversing the same ground over again. It pains me very much to have to say that we have been constrained, in spite of our greatest reluctance, to drastically curtail our programme of new expenditure during the coming year in order to satisfy the paramount requirements of military and civil defence. There is, however, another important factor which, as pointed out last year, has specifically affected adversely the many-sided beneficial activities of this nation-building department, I mean the gradual depletion of our superior staff in consequence of the deputation of our trained and experienced engineers to meet the increasing demand for engineering services for the successful prosecution of the war. The position has worsened, far from improving, on account of the retirement of three of our senior officers and it has been further aggravated by the fact that our staff, denuded as it is, has been called upon to bear an onerous burden imposed upon it by a disastrous natural calamity, *i.e.*, the recent cyclone which swept over Bengal in the last autumn. The normal activities of the department have had to be curtailed or slowed down to some extent on this score, and I am afraid it may be necessary to do so still further as the war progresses. Honourable members will, I am sure, realise how my department has been doubly affected, financial stringency synchronising with an acute shortage of experienced superior officers and trained subordinates. All that can be done in this deplorable state of things—and this is bound to continue at least so long as the war lasts—is to see that neither the works in progress nor such new works as are imperatively urgent or have a special bearing on increased food production, are put off.

I believe I have said enough to account for the omission of any new works in the budget under discussion. The position is undoubtedly far from satisfactory. But in the exigency of the abnormal situation created by the war there is no other alternative. There are certainly a number of important schemes ready in our hand such as the Howrah-Hooghly Flushing Scheme, the Muir project and the Central Bengal Flushing Scheme, to mention only the more important ones of them. As we have neither the material resources nor the requisite technical manpower at our command for the successful prosecution of all such comprehensive schemes, the House will, I hope, agree with me that it would be a sheer blunder to launch them under the present disturbed economic conditions of the country. Assuming, but not admitting even for a moment, that it is either desirable or expedient to float loans in the present-day money market and thereby raise the funds required for such ambitious schemes, we shall still be faced with the insuperable difficulty of securing the requisite engineering services for such works. Moreover, in these days of inflation and violent fluctuations in prices and wages the monies which might be raised by loans

would not be worth half as much as under normal conditions, and that for the simple reason that both labour and materials would cost much more now than they did before. Then again, so long as the present control over certain basic articles of strategic value is maintained—and it is bound to be maintained as long as the war lasts—it would be wholly impossible to procure the huge quantities of iron, steel, cement, bricks, etc., which would be required for the purpose. The combined effect of all these diverse and complex factors is to enhance the cost of these schemes far in excess of the estimates. This means, in the ultimate analysis, a high incidence of taxation in the shape of a compulsory improvement levy upon the cultivators who will be called upon, under the Development Act, to meet the cost of all such improvement works. I have not the least doubt that the House will agree with me that it will impose too serious a burden on the slender resources of the half-clad and famished peasantry of the country; nay, it might prove to be the last straw on the camel's back.

In view of the important considerations mentioned just now, we are of the opinion that the projects of the magnitude which I have just mentioned should be set apart for the time being, so that they might be taken up as part of our post-war reconstruction programme. This is undoubtedly a more desirable alternative, since it would not only lessen the cost of the scheme and the consequent incidence of financial burden on the poor cultivators but also provide employment for a large number of persons now engaged in war activities, who would otherwise remain unemployed after the cessation of the hostilities.

A number of cut motions have been tabled to raise a general discussion about the policy of the department. It is far from my intention to minimise the importance or significance of a settled policy, without which no concerted or planned programme is practicable. But faced as we are with a crisis—social, political and economic—in consequence of the war, I do not think it would be worth while for me to do more than indicate what would, in my opinion, be the right line of approach. As things stand at present, schemes of improvement or protection are ordinarily to be paid for by either cultivators or zemindars and tenure-holders, according as they are undertaken under the Development Act or the Embankment Act. With the exception of a few well-defined and broad categories, the line of demarcation is generally too thin to be of any practical use, and in any particular case it rests with the arbitrary discretion of the powers that be to decide whether the scheme should be taken under the one Act or the other. There is no general principle, acceptable to all classes, in accordance with which it might be practicable to adjust their rival and conflicting claims. It has often been suggested that all beneficial activities which the department is called upon to undertake should be financed out of provincial revenues. I have no time at my disposal to discuss at length the pros and cons of this proposition. But may I, Sir, ask the House whether it is at all fair to the general tax-payer that he should be made to pay for schemes from which he gets no direct return? In my humble opinion, far from being a satisfactory solution, it merely evades the issue. So long as the

land system of Bengal remains as it is, no practicable solution, based upon a fair and equitable readjustment of rival claims of various landed classes, can be thought of. This is one of the vital reasons why the Krishak Proja Party of which I am privileged to be the leader stands for the immediate abolition of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. It is my settled conviction that until and unless we take courage in both hands and face the social and economic consequences which might follow in the wake of this momentous change, we shall never enter the promised land of which we can have but a faint vista from a far-off mountain top. That is why my party presses for the abolition of the Permanent Settlement and we are determined to fight on till the goal is achieved.

It gives me great pleasure to say that the House at long last accepted in principle the abolition of the Permanent Settlement, which is the most important plank in the policy and programme of my party. I do not prophesy a new Heaven and a new Earth, as a consequence of the economic and agricultural reconstruction which would follow in its wake; but I do claim that the way to all-round national progress would be cleared and in particular the Irrigation Department will be in a better position to go ahead with costly schemes which will yield a direct return to the money invested thereon. The prosperity of the canal colonies of the Punjab is an instructive instance to the point. These areas have profited so much by ameliorative and beneficial measures because the land which was thereby reclaimed was the property of the State and became a source of profit to the State as a result of reclamation carried out.

There is no doubt a close parallelism between the Punjab and Bengal, so far as the problems of irrigation are concerned. But, Sir, the analogy should not be carried too far. Bengal is a deltaic province and, studded as she is with a network of rivers and natural streams, she has a problem of her own, essentially distinguishable from any that might be met with elsewhere. The past glory of Bengal epitomised in the short and simple expression "Sonar Bangla" was mainly due to her magnificent systems of rivers, which are now in a decadent condition. How to resuscitate and conserve this national asset is the crucial problem on the right solution of which depends her return to the glory and prosperity that were once her own.

How vast and complex is this problem will be apparent from what I said in my budget speech last year. Sir, I do not want to traverse the ground over again. I must, however, refer at least to one aspect of the problem even at the risk of repetition; and that is the effect of the construction of roads and railways which have been built up without any regard to the principles of river conservancy. I take it, it will not now be disputed that the roads and railway embankments have contributed to an enormous extent towards the deterioration of rivers and natural streams in Bengal as a result of direct interference with their free spill and natural flow. To substantiate this proposition, if any proof is at all needed, one need not go beyond the four corners of the Indian Railway Act, 1890, which unequivocally permits the conscious and deliberate interference with

the courses of these natural agencies. If there is anybody who entertains any doubt, he need only refer to section 7 of the Act, which authorises a railway administration "to make or construct in, upon, across, under or over any rivers, canals, brooks, streams or other waters" and "divert or alter as well temporarily as permanently the course of any rivers, brooks, streams or water courses or raise or sink the level thereof in order more conveniently to carry them over or under or by the side of the railway as the railway administration thinks proper." In the exercise of these wide discretionary powers, the railway administration has freely and deliberately interfered with the regime of the rivers and their distributaries and spill channels. Let me cite but one instance in support of what I have just mentioned. In 1916 the Eastern Bengal (now Bengal and Assam) Railway administration came up with a proposal to notify under section 6 of the Bengal Embankment Act, 1882, the Ganges and all spills and connected streams over a considerable area to ensure the safety of the Hardinge Bridge which had been recently completed. In support of the proposal it was observed how "in recommending the Sara site for the Lower Ganges Bridge, the Engineering Committee of 1908 reviewed the possibility of the bridge being outflanked by the opening out of the Boral in the left bank or of the Gobindapur channel on the right bank.

It was held that if existing conditions are maintained, there was little fear, but that it would be necessary to take advantage of the provisions of the Bengal Embankment Act of 1882 to ensure that no action should be taken in the direction of improving these channels for water carriage or drainage in a manner which would tend to increase the flow in these and neighbouring spills. More than this, if these channels began to enlarge naturally it would be necessary to take steps to restrict the flow".

Sir, I have dealt with this instance in some details not so much to find fault with the railway administration or to minimise the importance of railway communication but to just impress upon the House the stupendous difficulty which confronts us in the matter of resuscitation of the dead and decadent rivers of Bengal. We may be on our guard for the future, but how to neutralise and undo the evil effect of the mistake already committed, which has been handed down to us as a legacy of the past, is a serious administrative and constitutional problem. Railway is a federal subject and it will be necessary to take up the matter with the Railway Board and the Government of India and induce them to agree to rectify the mischief which a haphazard construction of railway lines and railway bridges has done. This is no easy task. We are, however, determined to face it with grim determination and do all we can in the interest of the conservancy of our river systems which are so intimately bound up with the prosperity of a deltaic and agricultural province like Bengal.

(At this stage the Hon'ble Minister reached the time-limit but was allowed to continue for three minutes more.)

Sir, I am sorry that my time is nearly up. I have finished as regards the specific provisions made in the budget. As we are in the throes of

the war, it has not been practicable, for the weighty reasons already explained, to launch any comprehensive schemes. This is far from saying that we have done nothing to facilitate the nation-building activities of this developing department. Notwithstanding the limitations of the war-time budget, a definite and substantial advance has been made towards the establishment of an important institution, which, though not as spectacular as an ambitious scheme, cannot but make a signal contribution towards all such beneficial activities. I mean the establishment of the River Research Institute in Bengal which has been so much talked about on the floor of the House. The necessity for scientific research prior to a right approach to the all-important river problems in this country and for carrying on model experiments to ensure the success of costly schemes before undertaking them, has already been recognised, and the House has already approved of the proposal for the establishment of an institute where such research and experiment can be carried out. While presenting the budget for the current year, I expressed the hope to be able to start the institute during this year. I now feel gratified to be able to announce that the institute has already been ushered into existence and model experiments have already been started to test the efficacy of the structural alterations proposed to be made in the Anderson Weir. It will, however, take some time to set it in full working order. Although the institute has been established on a five-year basis, there can be no room for doubt that it has come to stay as a permanent institution of the province. It has accordingly been decided to establish it on our own land near Burranagore, but it has not been practicable to give effect to it at the present time when building materials are so scarce. It has, therefore, been decided to run the institution for the time being on a provisional basis. This explains why a sum of Rs. 1,11,000 only has been provided in the next year's budget. It gives me such pleasure to be able to say that with the courtesy and kind consent of the Punjab Government we have secured the services of an experienced expert, *i.e.*, Dr. N. K. Bose of the Punjab Research Institute and I hope under his able guidance the infant institution will soon thrive into maturity and begin to function in full swing.

With these words, Sir, I beg to move the present demand which I hope the House will see their way to sanction.

The motion of Mr. A. M. Abdul Hamid that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.," be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherjea that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Sahib Mofizuddin Ahmad that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Kazi Abul Masud that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Babu Madhusudan Sarkar that the demand of Rs. 48,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed that a sum of Rs. 48,13,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "XVII, Irrigation, etc.", was then put and agreed to.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

50—Civil Works and 81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,06,16,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to prepare schemes for fully utilising the Central Road Fund Subvention and on the postponement of important road projects.

Sir, few words are necessary to bring home to Government and to the members of this House the feeling that is in the minds of the public and the members generally about the condition of roads in this province, and it probably does not require a long speech to convince the Hon'ble Minister in charge about the urgency of developing roads of different character in Bengal. Yet, Sir, it is extremely regrettable that money allotted for road development is not spent and sufficient money that was promised some years ago as might be available for road development has not been allotted. From a study of the budget, as mentioned at page 91 of the Red Book, it will be noticed that there has been a complete falling off in the amount provided for road development in this province during the last two years, and the reason that has been assigned for not being able to utilise fully the amounts meant for road development has been mentioned as non-availability of materials for road construction. Sir, I submit that this has been a very wrong approach to things. It has been our experience—and those of our friends who have been members of the Provincial Board of Communications will bear me out—that a road project ordinarily takes about 5 years

to complete. The first stage is the stage of selection of the alignment. Then comes the stage of the Government of India giving their approval to the alignment. Thirdly, comes the stage of final approval by the Provincial Government here. Then begins the necessary survey work and that is followed by a series of land acquisition processes. Thereafter we have contracts invited and these tenders sometimes take a long time. We then have the general grading and earth-work of the road and we have to leave that earth-work for a few seasons to settle and the metalling process can be taken up only thereafter. In some cases like the Tangail-Mymensingh Road and the Krishnagar-Jaguli Road, it has been discovered that much longer time than even three to four years was taken to complete the roads.

Sir, that being the experience, I submit that it is not a very wise policy to abandon or keep in suspension road projects simply because we do not at the present moment have enough materials to spare because there are important demands on our road materials for urgent military purposes.

Sir, there are two directions in which I would like my constructive suggestions to be offered. The first thing is that with regard to important inter-provincial or inter-district roads, Government may at least finish the stages of survey, land acquisition and earth-work. That will leave the actual metalling of the roads over until after the war.

Sir, with regard to another series of roads, namely, the village roads and inter-district roads, much more than that can be done. So far as village roads are concerned, I submit that we have had in the past no policy whatsoever. We had unfortunately been obsessed with a large degree of respect for local autonomy and here I am speaking with some amount of responsibility and hesitation too, representing as I do the municipal constituency of the Presidency Division. With all due respect to our local bodies, I feel that so far as general planning or policy is concerned, the local bodies are not in a position to undertake the planning of roads in their respective areas and it should be the duty of Government to lay down certain general policies applicable to all local bodies not merely in the municipal areas but also in the rural areas so that they in their turn may know to what extent local funds may be available and to what extent Government may be prepared to come forward with assistance. In regard to the rural roads there is hardly any road policy and that is acting very seriously in hampering the growth of the right type of rural roads. As a matter of fact, our village roads are no better than pieces of tortuous land left over just as found convenient by owners of land without any suitable alignment, without any drainage and very often, Sir, neighbours do not have much respect for the road alignment and they try to encroach on the road sometimes leaving ultimately a very narrow strip of by-lane for people, cattle and carts to go through. Therefore, it should be our policy, Sir, to lay down definite plans as to the width that has to be maintained, drainage that has to be kept properly and we should have some legislation—some definite legislation—to see that there may be proper type of usable roads maintained throughout the province.

Here, Sir, a somewhat good progress was made, at least somewhat sincere attempts were made by the Bombay Government under the Congress regime. A Special Officer was appointed—an Engineer of reputation—to see how quickly village roads could be improved and through a series of experiments he demonstrated that "although we could not make such good roads as would stand heavy motor traffic, fairly good roads could be constructed with not more than Rs. 2,000 a mile and the road surface was to be with mere clay mixed with sand" and the only important thing about these roads that I could notice was that every road had a proper grading and proper drainage so that there would be no accumulation of water on the road surface. When I was in Bombay a few years ago I met this energetic Engineer and made it a point to see one of the roads that he had constructed and I was delighted to see such *kutcha* roads. These ordinary village roads constructed according to his advice were standing normal bullock-cart traffic as well as some casual motor traffic quite all right even during the rains. I know that so far as Bengal is concerned the soil condition is such that such roads may not also stand casual motor traffic in addition to normal bullock-cart traffic. I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to see if he can do something like that and can adopt a road policy—if bigger roads cannot be constructed—at least during the war for constructing roads in rural areas which would not require such materials like stone, cement, sand and bitumen.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, my purpose in moving this cut motion is to draw the particular attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Works to the dangerous condition of the canal side roads between Manicktalla and Belgachia and the closure of the Ultadanga Bridge. Sir, I would not like even my worst enemy's worst motor car to be driven by this road. It is, I understand, the proud privilege of the Public Works Department to maintain this road; though it is situated within the Calcutta area of the municipality, but being on the 2 sides of the canal which belongs to the Irrigation Department Government have kept the maintenance of these roads in their own charge. I would have declared a reward if anybody, if any member of this House, can drive a motor car through that road beginning from the Belgachia side, even a quarter of a mile, without at least coming across half a dozen bumps. I have brought the matter to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister——

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I had a drive along that road without much difficulty.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: The Hon'ble Minister must have had an extra strong spring in his motor car. Or my friend has had to use many double tyres. Sir, I do not think even lorries can pass by that road. That is the road by which we have got to approach the Ultadanga

railway station, that is the road by which one goes to important mill areas but I cannot understand why Government should be so callous not only to the safety of the vehicular traffic but also to the serious danger to which people who pass by that road are exposed. Sir, the rainy season is coming and rain water will cover up the deep ditches inside the road. I am sure the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Works Department will receive some notice for paying compensation for deaths caused by keeping the road in such a horrible condition. But since this cut motion has been tabled, I must acknowledge with some gratefulness, some bricks had been collected near the road side with a view possibly to make necessary repairs.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a Government road, Sir?

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: This is absolutely a Government road and the Corporation of Calcutta has nothing to do with it. I understand that the Corporation Engineer has been in correspondence with Government to take steps in the matter of expediting repairs, but the Government is not doing anything in this matter. Without taking any further time of the House I would ask the Hon'ble Minister, who has stated that he has seen the road himself, to take immediate action in the matter.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I will see to it, Sir.

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this to raise a discussion on the policy followed in the department.

Sir, it appears that this very important spending department of the Government is suffering from an entire lack of any principle or fixed policy. Everybody in the House knows that the codes, manuals and rules of the department are about half a century old and require thorough overhauling to prevent waste, loopholes for dishonesty and so forth. A Special Officer was appointed for the purpose but the work was stopped when partly done. Thus the old defective rules have been allowed to continue, the work of revision so far done will be useless and so much money spent on it has been wasted.

Sir, in the matter of Government of India's Road Fund works a highly paid Special Officer was retained for one year even though the Chief Engineer is said to have opposed it on the ground that the peace time projects had to be slowed down or abandoned for the more important and urgent war works and strategic roads and increase in the cost of materials.

Sir, though a very large number of heavy projects have been undertaken, the department has failed to reorganise the executive staff and is following a policy of makeshift arrangements and helpless drift. Supervision by superior officers which even in normal times appears to have been inadequate, has been reduced practically to nothing.

Sir, mushroom contractors have grown overnight on the recommendation of this or that high official or party member or other interested people and these have been given big contracts. Sir, it is an open secret that many of these contractors have made and are making enormous profits at the cost of the people and some at least of the officers and persons in authority are sharing the spoils. Roads are being widened and surfaced hastily and carelessly. Sir, the House would no doubt agree with me that war emergency must not be allowed to be an excuse for criminal waste of money. Though the rates have had to be enhanced on account of the increase in the cost of materials and other factors but, Sir, no attempt has been made to keep the rates within reasonable limits. We know that the actual labourers are not being paid appreciably above the pre-war rates even though the contractors are given at 5 or 6 times the old rates and often much higher for labour alone. Sir, one inevitable effect of this is discontent and possibility of unrest among the labouring class—cost of living having increased enormously. Another palpable effect is that District Boards and other local authorities are not being able to get the services of contractors to maintain their own works.

Sir, even in the matter of promotion no definite policy is being followed and this leads to nepotism and consequent deterioration in the morale of the services.

Sir, this department will naturally have to assume heavy responsibilities in post-war reconstruction and we find utter lack of foresight and want of attempt at framing any definite plan or policy. There is not even an attempt to execute the war emergency works in a manner that would retain their usefulness after the war.

Sir, I would conclude by saying that truly the department is now drifting in a derelict fashion and the old "Public Waste Department" has now become a department of "Criminal Waste," "Careless Works" and "Cause for Worry."

With these few words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. C. MORGAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move my amendment No. 28 that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about policy and post-war planning with regard to roads.

Sir, so far as the present budget is concerned there is nothing inspiring in the road programme, money having been allotted for continuing work already in progress, but I want a declaration from Government as to the general policy of road construction, especially with regard to post-war planning.

It is interesting to know that the I.R.T.D.A. Council has been in correspondence with Sir Edward Benthall, Transport Member of the Government of India, on the subject of road construction as part of a post-war programme and also, in view of the big development of road transport

expected after the war, attention should now be paid to the co-ordination of road and rail. Three important points have been put forward by the I.R.T.D.A. They are so important that with your permission I put them separately.

(1) That the Association is convinced that the acceptance of the principle of building roads from capital is a necessary pre-requisite of any plan, and that no adequate plan can be prepared on any other basis.

(2) That the construction of new roads should be entrusted to a new agency outside the Communications and Works—roads being constructed in the same manner as docks are constructed for a Port Trust, and then handed over to the Communications and Works for maintenance.

(3) The Government of India should call for a programme from each province showing what they consider the minimum requirements of new main and subsidiary roads and so to plan the roads that the system would co-ordinate with railways and waterways.

(4) Each province should be provided with a Roads Committee with power to employ a Consulting Engineer highly trained and experienced in modern road construction.

Sir, these points are well worth consideration and under those various points I make the following remarks:—

With regard to No. 1, finance is all important. The present system of financing from revenue is not satisfactory.

Item No. 2 is long overdue. Communications should be one department and Works another. Roadmaking is a special job and should be a department by itself staffed by Engineers with special training.

Item No. 3 is more or less what is done at present. Each province sends up its programme for the year to the Central Government for approval, but the programmes should be submitted to the Roads Committee visualized in item No. 4, that is, Provincial Roads Committee.

Sir, we have our King's Survey and Report and it is necessary that—

Firstly, Communications should be separated from Works and a Roads Committee appointed.

Secondly, the programme for the coming year should be submitted to the Roads Committee for approval before same is forwarded to the Government of India.

Sir, there used to be a Communications and Works Committee to advise the Minister in charge but it seems to have disappeared.

Sir, I now call upon Government to take up this road matter seriously and at once separate Communications from Works and appoint a Roads Committee, so that present and future planning of road construction can be properly dealt with, both as regards our own provincial roads and inter-provincial connections.

Sir, recognition of the importance of road transport is long overdue. It is destined to play a major part in post-war recovery. And by far the

most important nation-building activity is the construction and maintenance of rural communication. Efficient use of a country depends mainly on rural communications.

Sir, in this connection the Hon'ble Minister has done a great deal of touring in the past two months and I hope that this question of roads and rural communications has been his first thought in making his inspection.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I would not have intervened in this debate. But there is a cut motion in the order paper which has not been moved in connection with which I desired to make an announcement. That is in connection with the cut motion which had been tabled by Mr. Muhammad Israil seeking to raise a discussion on the omission to provide money in the next year's budget for a climatic sanatorium. I find that Mr. Israil has not moved that motion but still I feel, Sir, that the arrangements which Government have been able to make for the treatment of poorer patients should be stated before this House.

Now, Sir, it is well known that for the last three or four years Government have been in search of a site in the Himalayas. Ultimately a site was selected which would involve Government in a cost of Rs. 47 lakhs, the cost of constructing a road alone going up to Rs. 13 lakhs. Government had to abandon that project. Failure to secure materials in war time also stood in the way of any construction of any kind at all being undertaken. That was a situation which Government could not contemplate with equanimity from the point of view of tackling the enormous tuberculosis problem in this province. We find that it is not possible for Government to undertake a project of this character in this emergency. But we cannot sit back in a helpless mood. We have now decided to endow 50 additional free beds in the Jadavpur Tuberculosis Hospital and for that purpose to make a permanent additional recurring grant of Rs. 50,000 per year. The result is that Government will endow from the next year altogether 80 free beds and their total annual contribution to the Jadavpur Tuberculosis Hospital would amount to Rs. 80,000 per year.

Sir, immediately this Ministry came into office year before last it raised the grant to the Tuberculosis Hospital from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000. This year it has been possible for us to raise the grant from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 80,000 per year. I know that this only touches the fringe of the problem of tuberculosis in this province. But even in this emergent time when the calls on the purse of Government are so frequent and so insistent in other respects it is some satisfaction to us that we have been able to endow at least 80 beds in this hospital which has earned universal admiration for the work it is doing. I am also aware that all sections of the House, irrespective of party affiliations, have got a soft corner for this institution and for those who are working for this cause with such devotion. I am glad, Sir, to have this opportunity of making this announcement. Every

member of this House frequently receives applications for recommendations for free beds. It will now be possible for us to meet the ever-growing demand for free beds in this hospital which is doing such excellent work in the cause of relieving human suffering. (Applause.)

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: May I ask one question, Sir? Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell us what has happened to the money that was donated by a certain gentleman for the purposes of a climatic sanatorium?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I am glad that Mr. Tamizuddin Khan has raised this question. We would have been able to go into it in greater detail if the cut motion had been moved. That money is in the hands of Her Excellency the Marchioness of Linlithgow; and because the Government of Bengal has not been able to find out a suitable site and provide the materials for construction, that money is still in her hands and has not been spent yet.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I find the main criticism that has been levelled against this department is about the road policy. Before I take up particular items I will dispose of certain items. I will first take up the point raised by Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta. He has complained about the canal road. I give him an assurance that the matter has been taken up and will receive careful consideration not only of the officials but also of the Ministry.

My friends Dr. Sanyal and Mr. Morgan have suggested certain plans to be followed so far as road making is concerned, and I will take them up just now. I will not deal with all the items that are before me. In the budget it has been stated that we have decreased the allotment so far as building is concerned. I will simply deal with the question of future reconstruction of road planning, because to me it seems to be the most important thing that has been discussed in this House this afternoon. I will give the House a little idea of the road planning that has been undertaken by Government up till now.

In April, 1938, a Special Officer designated Special Officer, Road Fund Works, and some staff were appointed, the expense being debited to the Central Road Fund allotted to this province and they were entrusted with the task of expediting the Road Fund Works. The work was taken up and some roads have been completed and others are in actual progress. The war came in and the engineers and staff have been taken away and materials could not be had. So, we had to stop those works and those roads.

Sir, as regards village roads and other roads which do not require such materials as stone, cement, bitumen and asphalt, I hope I will make the position clear when I give a picture before the House as to what we propose to do in the near future. Government are alive to the question of planning post-war road development on an ambitious scale. They are aware what part a vigorous construction programme can play in the general industrialisation of the country and in combating unemployment and other aftermaths of war during the post-war period. They also realise that such

a programme cannot be entirely financed from revenue receipts. Government are therefore willing to consider the question of raising necessary fund by capitalising a suitable portion of their regular revenues. The details have not however as yet been worked out.

Sir, before I conclude, I think I should state before the House the ideas I have gained during the short term of my office as Communication Minister in this province about the road problem. If we were able to undertake any comprehensive review of what has been achieved in the past, we should find ground both for satisfaction and for misgiving. The development of the main road system has been extensive and it has had big effects on the life and the economy of the province. Those who have done so much to lead in spite of this development, can look back on a big achievement. But few will question this appraisement when one refers to the unbalanced state of the road system. This is a subject on which anyone who, unlike myself, is interested in railway traffic touches with diffidence; but it does seem that a disproportionate amount of our resources has gone to developing the main arteries and that the large and virtually undeveloped rural tracts have got rather less than they deserve, and much less than they need.

There is a very important factor to which I would like to refer in brief and it is the close connection between road development and the internal combustion engine. There has been a tendency to talk as if the motor vehicle was the only user of the road. We hear constantly of the needs of motor transport but very little of the needs of those who depend on time-honoured means of transport such as the bullock cart. Can it be that this is because those interested in motor transport are more vocal? They have a press to voice their woes, they form associations, they conduct propaganda, while their rivals on the road are mute. Moreover, as town dwellers they—or might I even say we—naturally think first of improving facilities between cities and along routes which are already familiar.

The road problem did not start with the introduction of motor transport; they are not even now, in the main, problems of motor transport, and they will not in the future relate solely to motor transport. The villagers needed a good road long before the internal combustion engine was invented; and most of them are waiting for it still. These ideas that are increasingly engaging popular imagination should govern our decisions while undertaking any plan or programme for post-war reconstruction. I may confess to the idea that circumstances make it difficult to secure at present any comprehensive review of road policy for we have reached a stage when, if conditions had been more auspicious, we might well have paused to take stock of the position and decided how to set our course for the future. But the demands of the war on our energies are imperative and the situation, with its financial and constitutional uncertainties, is not one in which reliable long-term plans can be prepared. Even in such a matter as road-making the war is already playing a big part, and it is a matter for satisfaction that in this sphere the war effort should leave behind it something of lasting benefit to the community.

Problems of the character mentioned above can perhaps be tackled and solved by the orthodox method of securing funds and applying them economically. But I doubt myself if the wider problem of rural transport is soluble by such methods. I find it difficult to visualize any loan or tax in money that will supply the countryside with great net-work of all-weather roads that it needs. Is it perhaps possible that the solution lies not with any external official agency but with the people themselves? The capacity of most people in this province to contribute in money towards public work and public welfare is sorely limited, but there are multitudes who could contribute in kind. Here, where we are constantly told that so many have time to spare, road-making would bring quicker results than the spinning-wheel is likely to achieve.

About 70 years ago Ruskin, who was then Professor of Art at Oxford, took his students out to build roads in the surrounding country. England scoffed at the absurdity of the idea; for in this, as in other ideas, he was years ahead of his time. He was trying to teach lessons that we have not yet absorbed fully today—the dignity of labour, the value of using one's hands, the importance of social service and the need of common effort by all classes for all classes of men.

It may be argued that any big advance along such lines is hardly possible without a measure of compulsion and that the public at present would not accept compulsion. I think that is true. Memories of centuries of *begar* remain, and this would seem like a return to the old days when roads were made and maintained by forced labour. But such forced labour was feared and disliked because it was largely imposed by external authority on a limited number of poor men for the benefit of others. Would there always be the same objection to a free people resolving that all, rich and poor alike, shall give some days of their year to causes of common benefit? Imagination glows at the thought of the bureaucrat released for a few days from his files for the open road, the businessman losing a few thousands in healthy exertion, the doctor getting an unusual tonic, the journalist writing his sermons in stones, the schoolmaster learning in a new school.

It may look fantastic dream, perhaps a nightmare to some. I am not advocating a policy for the present; because it is not practical politics at the present moment and the most enthusiastic advocate of uplift by compulsion will find, when the time comes, that there is a good deal that can be said against it. But it is occasionally profitable to ponder over questions that may arise in the future, and this is one of them.

I do for this reason propose to convene a conference of the representatives of the various local bodies such as the District Boards, representatives of parties in the Legislatures and other rural institutions who can discuss on problems affecting their constituencies in the matter of village roads and give us the benefit of their ideas and advice. Bengal is very poor in the matter of her road communication; especially rural Bengal suffers very much for the want of roads that can connect the villages with inter-district roads. So, in our future plans we have to bear in mind that the net-work

of road-making does not lose the idea of connecting the villages with our inter-district and trunk roads. In the matter of maintenance of the roads also that are in existence we have many problems to face.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: In the distant future?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: No, in the very near future. With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House, and I hope that my honourable friends will be pleased to withdraw their amendments.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister that the matter is being attended to not formally but that he is personally seeing to it, I would like to beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then, by the leave of the House, withdrawn.

The motion of Khan Bahadur A. F. M. Abdur Rahman that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

Mr. G. MORGAN: Sir, in view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister, I would beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. G. Morgan that the demand of Rs. 1,06,16,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then, by the leave of the House, withdrawn.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed that a sum of Rs. 1,06,16,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue", was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-20 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Thursday, the 18th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 18th March, 1943, at 3-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 4 Hon'ble Ministers and 161 members.

Want of quorum.

[When the House assembled the attention of Mr. Speaker was drawn to the fact that there was no quorum. It was found after counting of heads that there was no quorum in the House and the warning bell was rung for about 3 minutes when on recounting it was found that there was quorum present.]

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions.

Point of privilege.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I rise on a point of privilege, before we proceed with the ordinary business of the House.

Sir, as you are aware, yesterday a large number of famished women and children came into the precincts of this House and certain steps were taken. Sir, you were not in the Chair at that time. Mr. Deputy Speaker who was in the Chair was pleased to adjourn the House for some time and the Hon'ble Chief Minister made a reference to it in the House itself. But we find that the entire report about that incident has been suppressed by Government and the demand of these hungry women and children has not found any mention in the newspapers. It may be a matter which may have been actuated with the best of intentions. But I would submit, Sir, that the proceedings of this House have a privilege and a sanctity, and it is up to you to protect them. So far as the Press is concerned, the Press has to take orders from the Press Officer. We would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge what the position is and whether it is the policy of the Government to suppress any expression of legitimate desire on the part of the people even if it is not accompanied by any threat of violence or disorder. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister the position very clearly.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not the policy of Government to suppress anything, far less the very expression of public opinion. It is true, Sir, that last night instructions were given to the Press not to publish anything regarding the demonstrations held in the compound of the Assembly House yesterday afternoon. Sir, it was apprehended that publication of that might lead to a repetition in this House or elsewhere or it may be in other places in the mufassal. We are waiting to see what happens and if the whole thing subsides the order given to the Press will certainly be withdrawn. The order that was passed was done as a measure of caution and not to curtail the liberty of the Press.

STARRED QUESTION.

(to which oral answer was given)

Distress in Pabna district and Test Relief Work.

***171. Maulvi AZAHAR ALI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware of the fact that—

(*i*) the people of the district of Pabna, specially the labour class, have been hard-hit for want of work owing to failure of crops and distress prevailing among the cultivating classes; and

(*ii*) that no test relief work has been started there by District Board as was done in previous years of distress?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Government propose to take to ameliorate the condition of the labour class in the district?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) (*i*) No. There is some distress due to failure of crops. The attendance at the test relief works, however, has been meagre.

(*ii*) Repair of roads on test work basis has been started by the District Board at (1) Natiabari, (2) Santhia, (3) Kazipur and (4) Kaijuri.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how much has been estimated to be given to the district board for test relief?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The information is not here, but I shall make enquiries and let the honourable member know.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), namely, the attendance at the test relief works, however, has been meagre, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the rate of remuneration given to the labourers?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: As a rule the rate of remuneration given under the Famine Code sometimes differs in different circumstances because the rate is fixed on the basis of the price of rice prevailing at the time. I have not got any information here as to what is the price of rice at present in this particular locality, but if my honourable friend desires the information, the information will be made available.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: What is the average income per day of a test relief-worker?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I have referred to the rate of remuneration in reply to the question just put by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. This rate, as I have already stated, depends upon the price of rice in the locality. I am saying that on the basis of my review of the situation in Midnapore.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, I have myself put certain questions on this subject, and the Famine Manual I have read entirely. There are certain principles laid down in it, but unfortunately the principles have not been followed. One such principle is that when rice sells at such and such prices, the worker will be paid at such and such rates.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am unable to say that.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of making an enquiry into the matter and settling the rate himself?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall certainly consider the question. With regard to the assurance that the honourable member may ask of me, I may tell him that although I may be a sympathetic person yet I have to rely upon a number of factors.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the percentage of failure of crops in this district?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not in a position to answer that question tonight, but if my honourable friend desires that information, that information will be made available to him.

Short-notice Question No. 171A.

(When Secretary called the name of the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman to answer the question, the Hon'ble Mr. Barman was not in the Chamber.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Barman is unavoidably absent at the present moment.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it is a short-notice question which should be answered as soon as possible.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Barman is away in conection with the Upper House election.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case, the question may stand over for the present.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Allowances to security prisoners.

52. Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total number of security prisoners (political)—

(1) before the 9th August, 1942, and

(2) on the 31st January, 1943;

(*ii*) the number of persons—

(1) arrested under section 129, Defence of India Rules, and

(2) convicted under Defence of India Rules;

(*iii*) the number of security prisoners—

(1) who applied for family allowance, and

(2) who have been granted family allowance; and

(*iv*) the number of persons who have been granted study allowance, the (1) maximum, and (2) minimum of (1) family and (2) study allowances granted?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of paying to each security prisoner in view of the high prices of all commodities—

(*i*) a personal allowance of Rs.20 per month;

(*ii*) a study allowance to each examinee; and

(*iii*) family allowance with a minimum of Rs.30 per month in all cases where the bread earner has been detained?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (*i*) As the figures for the dates asked for are not available, I give the figures corrected up to 28th July, 1942, and 28th January, 1943, respectively.

(1) 447.

(2) 1,643.

(*ii*) (1) 142 and (2) 1,355 on the 28th January, 1943.

(*iii*) (1) 852 and (2) 193 up to the 26th February, 1943.

(*iv*) Under the existing rules study allowance is not granted.

The maximum and minimum amounts of family allowance so far granted are respectively Rs.75 and Rs.6 per month.

(*b*) The question of the grant of a study allowance to each examinee is under my consideration. I do not consider it necessary to grant a personal allowance to each security prisoner. Neither do I consider it necessary to fix a minimum amount of Rs.30 per month as family allowance because the rate of family allowance depends on the merits of each individual case.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether in addition to the family allowance Government are considering the question of giving to the families a special medical allowance in case of illness in the families?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We will consider that point.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether any consideration is going to be made about the life insurance premium of the security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The matter has been under consideration; no decision has been come to yet.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to study allowance, how long has the matter been under consideration of the Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So far as I am concerned it has not been very long, because I came across the papers after notice of this was given, but I hope I will be able to give a satisfactory answer very soon.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that study allowance was to some extent allowed by the previous Ministry in power and has been curtailed or suspended by the present Ministry?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, I do not think so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the present arrangements for granting study allowance compared to the arrangements before December, 1941?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Certainly, I take it as a notice. I think nothing has been curtailed. I will give an answer later on.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there has been any interference or attempt at interference by the Government of India in the matter of granting of such allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, I am not aware.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not fair for the Minister in charge to say "not aware"; he should either say "yes" or "no".

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware. I will look up the papers. At the present moment I cannot say.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*iii*) regarding the number of applications for family allowances, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what measures have been devised to see that quicker disposal of these applications is effected?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We are revising many of these applications which have been rejected. On receipt of memorials applications are revised. All that I can say is that I am working unaided and unassisted and as much time as I can give I am giving.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the basis on which the amount of Rs. 6 per month has been fixed? Is it on the basis of the monthly expenses for maintaining one person or two persons or three persons in a family or none?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact various considerations are taken into account. A full report is asked for. Not merely the number of members of the family but also their other sources of income are taken into account. As regards each particular individual, if he is an earning member, generally a high rate of allowance is given, but if he is not an earning member——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No allowance is given.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not necessarily. Sometimes it so happens that if he is a boy who is prosecuting his studies or for some other consideration, then a lower sum is given.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of any single case in which a non-earning member's family has been allowed a family allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot give any instance, but I think we have given allowance to such members.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to question (*b*) (*iii*) the answer is "Neither do I consider it necessary to fix a minimum amount of Rs. 30 per month.....," will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is in his estimate the minimum allowance for maintaining one person for one month?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If he is a full-grown man, under present circumstances nothing less than Rs. 12.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: For food only.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: For clothing and other things Rs. 15.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then on what basis Rs. 6 is determined?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is no hard-and-fast rule. The rates of allowances vary according to circumstances. In view of the rise of foodstuffs and other articles, I admit that there is a case for increased allowance.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Even on the previous scale of diet, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the approximate or average expense on a prisoner comes to anything less than Rs. 6?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Formerly a flat rate of Rs. 10 was allowed. We have relaxed that and we are giving a higher rate of allowance. Here it is stated that a minimum of Rs. 30 would be needed. In some cases it may not be necessary. Allowance is not given to compensate for the loss to the family, but to prevent the family from getting into destitution and for that purpose a lesser sum may be necessary. To decide what ought to be the minimum each case has to be judged on its own merits.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that considerable feeling exists in the country regarding the niggardly attitude of the Government in the matter of allowances—both in granting as well as in fixing the sum actually to be paid?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is a section of the people who are dissatisfied. I am aware of it.

Persons arrested in Midnapore and detained as security prisoners.

53. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, thana by thana, during the period of 8th July, 1942, to 31st January, 1943—

(*a*) the total number of persons arrested in the district of Midnapore;

(*b*) the total number of arrests of Midnapore people outside the district;

(*c*) the total number of Midnapore people detained in various jails as security prisoners (separate list as per different jails);

(*d*) the total number of convicted persons in Midnapore Jail (Central) and all the sub-jails of the district with reference to their classification;

(*e*) the total number of undertrials in all the jails of the district on the 31st January, 1943; and

(*f*) total number of persons acquitted on trial?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The information asked for is not readily available and cannot be collected without an expenditure of time, labour and stationery which would be unjustifiable in the present emergency.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how it is impossible to collect the total number of persons arrested in the district of Midnapore from the 8th July, 1942, to 31st January, 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir. The question is divided into six parts. One single part may be a small matter, but the cumulative effect of all the six may be a big matter and that is a big matter.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to divide this question into six parts and give answers to those parts which are readily available?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If my honourable friend wants answers piecemeal, I shall certainly answer.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that the Government think it improper to make an expenditure of time, labour and even some stationery for collecting information about people who have been deprived of their liberty without trial?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If the question is put in that way I must say that merely because a man is deprived of his liberty Government is under no obligation to furnish the details to anybody, but if a question is put as a question of privilege of a member of this House I have got to answer. I would ask the honourable member to go through the list and decide for himself whether the jaded and overworked officers of Government, having regard to all the facts and circumstances, have got the time to sit down and collect all the information necessary to give a satisfactory answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to these six questions, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which particular question is considered by him to be difficult for jaded and overworked Government officers to collect and reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: With members like my honourable friend rising to put supplementary questions on every conceivable occasion, every question is of an extraordinary character and the whole list is so formidably heavy that, as I have already said, the cumulative effect certainly debars anyone from sitting down to answer the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister, who is a versatile genius, apply his mind on these questions specifically, without having a general formula stated for all, and state which particular information of these six questions is not readily available? So far as we can find only (*b*) may be difficult, but so far as (*a*), (*c*), (*d*), (*e*) and (*f*) are concerned, the information is readily available. For example, the total number of under-trials in all the jails. Daily statements are made in the Jail Register at the close of the day and the total number of under-trials is noted.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the Minister in charge may be a versatile genius, but the poor clerks are half-educated.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The answer is the Minister's answer.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I shall make an attempt to give the due answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you, Sir.

Held-over questions.

(Held-over starred question No. 62 was then called and again held over.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: What about the Nawab Bahadur?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur is not here, and the Hon'ble Mr. Barman is also not here.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I submitted yesterday that the Parliamentary Secretary could have been asked to answer these questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: It appears that that arrangement has not been made.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Sir, I am quite prepared to answer the supplementary questions on behalf of the Nawab Bahadur if it is the desire of the House, but I do not like to be considered guilty of shirking my duties.

Mr. SPEAKER: Nobody perhaps thought in that way.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We are prepared to have the answer through her rather than from an ill-informed Minister.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: She will do better justice than the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur.

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Expenditure for maintaining the Directorate of Civil Supplies.

10. Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state the expenditure incurred for running the Department of Director of Civil Supplies, Bengal, in December, 1942?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): Rs. 25,900 approximately, for the Headquarter Office and the Office of the Controller of Civil Supplies, Calcutta. If the honourable member wants to know the expenditure incurred by District and Subdivisional Supply Offices as well, necessary information will be collected and shown to him subsequently.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the expenditure of the Civil Supply Directorate is soaring daily high and high, because some of the officers have not the courtesy to consult the Finance Department about the expenses?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Is that a question directed to me?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes. The question is about the expenditure for maintaining the Directorate of Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not Nawab Habibullah Bahadur.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You are the Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not in a position to answer that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the question relates to the Civil Supply Directorate. My question is: is the Finance Minister——

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: How can he answer that question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That question is answered and the total amount is shown.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question has been answered by the Nawab Bahadur.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Sir, I want to suggest one thing. I wish that this question be held over. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister is so very occupied that it is simply impossible for him to take up the work of another Minister in addition to his own work. As the Parliamentary Secretary I am quite prepared to answer the supplementary questions, and I shall do my best in my humble way to answer the supplementaries as far as possible, if only Dr. Sanyal will be a little (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Charitable!) merciful to me. (Laughter.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have before me a question already answered, and I have put a question now to a Minister who is in the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will take it as a notice, and answer it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Let me complete my question then. Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that without his own personal knowledge and without the actual approval of the Finance Minister large sums, namely, Rs. 2,500 as salary for the Secretary of the Distributing Trades Tribunal, Rs. 2,000 each for two members of the Distributing Trades Tribunal and a certain amount of money for the wife of the Secretary of the Tribunal to enable him to appoint his wife as his Personal Assistant in the department have been sanctioned and that wife has been appointed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that his attention was drawn to this matter ten days ago and that the impending attempt by the Secretary, Mr. Scott, to get his wife appointed as his Personal Assistant was also brought to his notice? What action was taken by him?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That was gossip and not information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that the appointment has been finished?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not put your questions in a hurry. You have put your question forcefully and the Hon'ble the Chief Minister is ready to answer you so far as it is within his knowledge, but put your question slowly.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the questioner himself brought to his notice this fact that an attempt was being made by the Secretary, Mr. Scott, of the Distributing Trades Tribunal to get his wife appointed as his Personal Assistant on a very high salary and that his wife was being brought down from Lahore by payment of travelling allowance from Lahore by the Government of Bengal? Was this matter brought to his notice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: A statement about his wife was made to me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What was the action taken by him?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There was no occasion for me to take any action, because at that time no appointment had been made and also I was not making any appointment. So I do not know if the appointment has been made at all. If my honourable friend gives me a written question or as many question as he likes, I will try to give answers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is prepared to make an enquiry in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, yes. I will take it as a notice and I will answer it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the qualifications of Mrs. Scott?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Family allowances of political security prisoners.

***93. Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state the number of applications for family allowance received from political security prisoners?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of prisoners that have been granted such allowance; and

(*ii*) the amount given to each of them?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the principle upon which the grant of such allowance is made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The information is not readily available.

(*b*) (*i*) 163.

(*ii*) The amount given ranges from Rs.6 to Rs.75 per month.

(*c*) I refer the honourable member to the *communiqué*, dated the 12th September, 1942, of which a copy is laid on the Library Table.

Starred question No. 94.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before any supplementary questions are put, I want to state that I did not know that this question will be taken up today. I have not got the files here, and I am not prepared. I pray that this question may be held over.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, there is no answer to the question as to whether Sreejukta Bimal Protiva Devi was segregated or kept alone.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got the file here. I do not know that.

Mr. SPEAKER: He wants time.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I did not know that this question will come up today.

(The question was again held over.)

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of complaint. Even the Hon'ble Chief Minister does not know what questions will be answered. It would be better if the Secretariat of this House would inform the members what questions are going to be answered on any particular date.

Mr. SPEAKER: There has been some difficulty with regard to this matter. Many questions have been held over. He has given an assurance that it will be taken up on the next working day.

Appointment of Home Guards and the members of the Muslim League.

***160. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMAD ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Civil Defence) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that a circular was issued to the District Officers prohibiting the appointment of Muslim Leaguers as Captains or Vice-Captains of the Home Guards; and

(*ii*) that District Officers were enjoined to consult the executives of the Hindu Mahasabha in the formation of the guards and the appointment of the personnel?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise as regards (*a*) (*ii*). As regards (*a*) (*i*), the prohibition was temporary until the attitude of the Muslim League to the Home Guard which was then equivocal, had been clarified.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any other revised circular has been issued by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Oh yes, immediately.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions over.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

40—Agriculture.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 51,54,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture".

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, on behalf of Nawabzada K. Nasarullah I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, the object of this motion is to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to supply seeds to agriculturists.

Sir, I beg further to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of this motion is to raise a discussion on the failure of "Grow More Food" campaign.

You know, Sir, that considering the circumstances prevailing in the country there can be no denying the fact that the province needs more food. The normal production is far below the minimum demand. Everyone realises the imperative necessity of growing more food to save our teeming millions from starvation. But the question is, how to do it? The "Grow More Food" campaign as started and conducted by Government has totally failed. Far from achieving its desired object, it has in many cases caused unnecessary harassment to the producers of food. The reasons are obvious. Government started the movement in a half-hearted and indifferent manner without any definite policy or scheme behind it. It has neither helped the producers nor added anything to food granary of the province.

Sir, it is unthinkable that a Government which is supposed to be responsible can deal with such a matter of vital importance in such an irresponsible and ill-conceived manner. Government started distribution of paddy seeds to cultivators at random, indiscriminately and unsystematically without even ascertaining the needs and requirements of different places. I know of a place in Jamalpur thana where the officers of the Agricultural Department circulated by beat of drum that they would distribute good paddy seeds. At first people were not forthcoming because they had their requisite quota in stock. The officer thought that it would not be to his credit if he failed to distribute the quantity placed at his disposal. He therefore managed to dispose of several maunds of paddy amongst the members of the village where he used to stay. As soon as people of neighbouring villages and unions came to know that paddy was being distributed in maunds, they all came to ask for it from the officer concerned, not with intent to use it as seed but to consume it as food. The officer was then unable to meet the demand and he had to purchase more paddy from the local market for distribution through the help of union boards. In some cases people were given cash money instead of paddy. It did not help the campaign, but it gave some relief to the poor people so far as they were able to provide food for their ever-hungry stomachs for the time being—not of course without bitter results in the long run.

Sir, here is a petition with me from some villagers of my constituency with complaints that they took loans at the rate of Rs. 3-2 each on condition of repaying the same by one maund of paddy in kind or at the rate of Rs. 4-8 in cash whichever is preferred. But to their misfortune they had to repay it at varied rates of Rs. 6 to Rs. 7-8 each for a loan of Rs. 3-2 only. I am going to forward this petition to the Hon'ble Minister in charge, and I hope he will take necessary action in the matter.

Sir, this was the way how the "Grow More Food" campaign was so far conducted by Government. I should like to make some concrete suggestions very briefly for consideration of the Hon'ble Minister in charge. They are as follows:—

Government should make an estimate of the quantity of food crops normally produced in the province and that of the additional quantity that may be required to meet the minimum demand. The respective average acreage of land necessary should also be estimated:

Needs and requirements of different places for seeds—particularly of those where additional land may be available for cultivation of food crops should first be ascertained:

Government should set up a machinery to see that the seeds advanced to cultivators are used for the purpose for which they are given:

Government should obtain reports of areas where the soil has deteriorated and where it can be improved for cultivation of food crops. Steps should be taken to do the needful where necessary:

District and subdivisional committees should be formed to give effect to the concrete schemes of the Government and not for academic discussions only as are being done at present. These local committees should have scope to make suggestions and recommendations to Government for action as local conditions may require:

Last but not least, jute acreage should be reduced to a minimum for the purpose of growing more food in the land thus available.

Sir, we need food and need it very badly. If the Government has any intention to avoid a catastrophe, they should take up the campaign of growing more food seriously and prepare a comprehensive scheme for the purpose. They should proceed methodically and earnestly. Unless this is so done, any expenditure for propaganda works alone would be worse than useless.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the futility of "Grow More Food" campaign.

Sir, the "Grow More Food" campaign of Government has been an utter failure. In the course of another debate members from all groups of the House proved that this campaign was a mere paper campaign, and, consequently, waste of money.

Sir, the policy of this "Grow More Food" campaign reminds us of the story of an ancient king who had an extra-affectionate queen. One day the queen wished that a tank should be excavated and that must be filled with milk. So, the subjects were ordered to fill the tank with milk and the contribution of every subject was fixed at one *lota* of milk. Everyone expected that all persons would contribute one *lota* of milk. Some of them,

however, thought that if one of them would contribute only a *lota* of water instead of milk, it would never be detected. As a result it happened that everyone contributed water instead of milk and the tank, instead of being filled with milk, was filled with water. Sir, this propaganda for "Grow More Food" has been exactly of a like nature.

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister the other day in the course of another debate told us that Government have done what was humanly possible, but on enquiry we find that nothing precious has been done and the result is absolutely nil. If the present policy—and the present policy is that it is nobody's business—continues to be followed, the result will be that there would be no additional food. We warned the Government that this policy was not at all a good policy. The result is now perceived by the Hon'ble Ministers—particularly yesterday they got an idea of what was the position in the countryside.

Sir, to cite an example, I may state that as a result of the cyclone in my constituency, that is, in the Diamond Harbour subdivision, at least, 2,00,000 bighas of land have been totally destroyed. At that time we expected that Government will give some help to the agriculturists, but up till now I can say this much that no adequate help has been given in that locality. Under normal circumstances, Sir, the total crop that was harvested in this area was about 15 lakh maunds of paddy, but the requirements of the people of the locality amounted to about five lakh maunds. So, if Government make a little propaganda they can have ten lakh maunds of paddy as surplus from this locality alone.

Now, Sir, I shall offer a concrete suggestion for the acceptance of the Government. I would suggest to the Hon'ble Minister——

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed to conclude his speech in two minutes.)

——to help the people of this area in every possible way. So far as I know, Sir, very meagre contributions have been made for the relief of the sufferers. So far as agricultural loan is concerned, I understand that a sum of only Rs. 90 or Rs. 100 is given to a group of eight or ten cultivators and the result is that every individual agriculturist gets only Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 which is not at all sufficient either for the purchase of cattle or of agricultural implements or of seeds. Therefore, I would suggest to the Hon'ble Minister to see that they can somehow keep themselves alive till the end of the year and in order to do that it is necessary that at least one lakh maund of paddy should be sent there. There is dearth of money in some quarters and even if money is given there is no food in the locality to be bought with that money. Restrictions on paddy should be removed so far as its supply in that locality is concerned and seeds should also be supplied in time; gratuitous relief should also be given until the harvesting of the next crop and loans given for the purchase of cattle and agricultural implements. If that is done, people in the reclaimed areas in the Sundarbans will not only be saved, but they will be able to give us a surplus of ten lakh maunds of paddy next year. I would therefore urge upon the Government that to make

the "Grow More Food" campaign a success, these things must be done by them for the agriculturists belonging to my constituency who in their turn, I am sure, will not fail to respond to the call of growing more food.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the fixation of the acreage for the cultivation of jute in the coming season at eight annas of the cropped area of 1940-41.

Sir, I do not think much need be said on this motion because I fully believe that responsible members in this Legislature are aware of the circumstances under which the present Government practically threw overboard the requirements of the "Grow More Food" campaign in this Province and we have been compelled under the so-called expert advice to agree to the requirements of His Majesty's Government and the Jute Mills Association to maintain a higher percentage of the production of jute in the present season.

Sir, with regard to this there is one important issue that we want to clear up. We were informed, Sir, that every section of this House including the supporters of Government were insistent that not only in order to stabilise jute prices but also to enable larger acreage under food crops the jute crop for the current year ought to have been restricted to 5 annas of 1940-41 cropped area, and at one stage we were practically given to understand that this was going to be the case. We would like to know on what basis and on what expert guidance the Government chose to do otherwise. It is reported that the Government had got some expert advice in that connection from one Professor Todd, who calls himself an expert in jute because he was imported from abroad some time ago on a fat salary to advise Government on the *fatka* market. I am not aware what that professor is doing, but I am aware that he has outlived his usefulness in this province. There was a time when this expert, who knew nothing about jute but pretended to know something about futures market, was required for advising Government on the *fatka* market. Sir, the futures market is closed and we do not know why the present Government is still maintaining this white elephant. This officer is being paid not only a regular salary although his term has expired, but he is again paid a large sum of about Rs. 18 a day as daily allowance. This is an unheard of thing that an officer of Government who is practically holding a permanent appointment, more or less, should be given for months and years a daily allowance at the rate of Rs. 18 per day.

Mr. I. A. CLARK: On a point of order, Sir. What has this matter to do with jute regulation?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I know that my friend there would be very hurt because his interests are being preserved by this class

of British officers. When it is found that the Indian section of this House thinks that this blessed professor, who had at one time shown some independent outlook, had succumbed to the pressure of the European Jute Mills Association, it is obvious that he would be immediately thought to be a fit and proper person by the European members.

Mr. I. A. CLARK: On a point of order, Sir. Has the honourable member any justification for bringing in the name of Professor Todd as being influenced by the Indian Jute Mills Association?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. You will have ample opportunity to reply to the points raised by Dr. Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, it is common knowledge, and let my esteemed friend deny that, that it was the insistence of the Jute Mills Association that weighed with the Government and probably the decision that was taken by Professor Todd was on that account and nothing else. There was a time when Professor Todd was not very much liked by the Jute Mills Association because at that stage he was not convinced of the special interests of the Europeans, fresh as he was then from Britain, but his close association with the Europeans here only for a few months, or rather for about a year has entirely changed his outlook. He has now identified himself with the Europeans here and he draws inspiration from British members of the jute trade. He does not dare do anything which may displease British jute magnates. That is, Sir, the position when experts are brought out from Britain to this unfortunate land of ours. Sir, I submit that it has been a colossal blunder on the part of the present Government to change the decision that was taken in a party meeting of the supporters of Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, please do not bring in party decisions here.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, that decision was supported by a large section of this House and it was a colossal blunder for the Government to have succumbed to the so-called expert advice from persons who knew nothing about jute fibre or jute trade in this country. This professor is now being maintained for no other work than to compile some statistics which can be done by a man on a salary of Rs. 200 a month only, but he is being paid something like the salary of a Secretary. Let him apply for some good job in England during the war where his services would be very useful. I beg of the Government to send him back to his mother country where his services would perhaps be invaluable. Sir, I submit that the time has come when the work of this professor at the present moment and the salary that is being paid to him for that work should be very carefully and very critically examined. Sir, we are not convinced of the usefulness of his services any more. He has done what was expected of him. Probably he has not even done that much, and if he has to be maintained let him be maintained out of the pocket of the British trade interests in this province, not out of the pocket of the tax-payers of Bengal. Sir, I have moved that the Government had blundered in the matter of the fixation of

jute acreage at eight annas this year, and I propose to go to vote on this. I would like to demand that if Government really want to stand by the interests of the jute-growers of this province, they should make it unequivocally clear that it is their intention in spite of what has been done under threat or under so-called expert advice, that each and every member of this House including the Hon'ble Ministers themselves would go out into the countryside and do effective propaganda, tell the villagers that although the maximum limit has been fixed there is nothing to prevent the jute-growers to grow less than the maximum. Let them issue a statement now—tomorrow—asking the jute-growing areas to restrict their crop and to substitute for that crop food crops of various kinds. Sir, there are ways and ways of doing things. I know that in this matter some members on the other side also feel very keenly, and I would see how many of them give expression to that desire. We shall test whether Government would be prepared to leave this matter as a matter of free voting and see how the members of this House feel about it. I demand, Sir, that this motion be accepted by the House—at least by the Indian section of the House—with complete unanimity.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the failure of the Government for the distribution of seeds of paddy where there was failure of crop last year.

Sir, with regard to the distribution of seeds, particularly the distribution of paddy seeds, both *aus* and *aman* has been urgently required in many parts of the affected areas of different districts. The cultivators have also got sufficient grounds to claim for that. Last year, Sir, under the "Grow More Food" campaign about 19 lakhs of rupees were estimated in the budget for distribution of seeds, but in the present budget nothing has been estimated. This shows that the present Ministry could not understand the gravity of the situation and they could not appreciate the difficulties of the cultivators. Sir, what do we find from the statistics of the production of crops? We find that in 1942-43 the production of rice is 6,938,000 tons and the consumption required for the province is 9,266,800 tons. That is, the deficit stands at 2,328,000 tons, i.e., 62,856,000 maunds of rice shortage in Bengal which is just about ¼ per cent. shortage of the total requirement. Besides, there is military consumption, as the province has to maintain a vast military force. Not only that but also a huge quantity of rice has been already exported from the province. In many places, as I have seen in different parts of the subdivision of Tangail, even the sowing seeds have not grown; in other places though bare seeds or a bit more might have grown, they have been eaten up by the cultivators to save themselves as well as their children in the acute shortage and scarcity. So a comprehensive scheme for the distribution of seeds, particularly paddy seeds, both *aus* and *aman*, where required, should be adopted at once on a larger scale so that even an inch of land cannot remain unsown for want of seeds by the starved and half-starved cultivators. With respect to the fallow lands

in the province though we cannot expect that anything would be done by the present Ministry, still I suggest that a comprehensive scheme should be made and worked out to bring all the fallow but culturable lands under cultivation. In this connection I beg to state that information regarding the particular locality of each district, the total acreages, quality and fertility, etc., of such fallow lands, the advantages of low or moderate rent charges and the offer of no *najar*,—all such information should be made available to the cultivators, specially of the deficit districts.

(At this stage the honourable member reached his time limit but was allowed one minute more.)

Legislations should be made to the effect that the lands cannot pass out of the hands of the agriculturists and that the minimum holding system should be introduced and that the maximum quantity of lands should be fixed so that a cultivator cannot possess more than that maximum limit.

Regarding jute, jute control, jute price and loan to the jute-growers, the present Ministry cannot but be held responsible to the people for criminal negligence.

Sir, Government maintains the Jute Regulation Department at a huge expenditure of not less than some 40 lakhs of rupees per annum—what for? —to control the growth of jute and jute price so that the poor jute-growers may get rightly and equitably a proper price for jute and for their labour. But what the present Ministry is doing? What they have done last year? For their mistake in fixing the quota the jute price came down hopelessly last year, this year and I am afraid, it would fall down next year too. It is nothing but an utter failure on the part of Government to keep up an economic price of jute. They could not start a warehouse system, they could not fix the minimum price of jute for creating a better Bengal on financial point of view, a better Bengal with respect to simply *dal-bhat* and two morsels of rice twice a day.

Sir, the country expects that the present Ministry helped, saved and sheltered by the Congress and Hindu Mahashava influence comes to its end in whom they have got no confidence at all and——

(At this stage the honourable member having reached the time limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to draw the attention of the House to the delay in fixing the quota of land to be sown with jute in the current season.

Sir, I think we have criticised the present Ministry too often and all our criticism seems to have fallen flat. Therefore, I think there is no further use in abusing or criticising the Ministry. We should now begin to congratulate them—congratulate them for the promptitude with which they undertook the execution of important public matters. This is one of those matters, viz., fixation of the jute quota.

Sir, the House remembers that it was in the last session of the Assembly which was held in September last that this matter was very thoroughly discussed. There was at that time a slump in the jute market and everyone seemed to be perturbed. Therefore what was suggested in this House was that Government should come to an immediate decision as to the next year's jute quota and that the quota should be fixed at about 4 annas. It was considered that if that was done then that would have a very salutary effect on the jute market. So far as we can see, Sir, members of the Progressive Coalition Party were also very keen about that. But we see, Sir, because honourable members of this House and the country in general were eager that the jute quota for the current season should have been fixed as early as possible that is why Government have slept over the matter this year longer than ever before and fixed the quota only the other day about the middle of February when the sowing season had already commenced. I do not know, Sir, what was the cause of this delay. The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge the other day in answer to a question stated that Government was not at fault because they had to consult first of all the Government of India and also His Majesty's Government. Sir, jute is an essential commodity necessary for this war. Therefore there may be something in what the Hon'ble Minister says that the Government of India and His Majesty's Government had some say in the matter, but I would submit, Sir, that the Ministry could not hold their own while they held their consultation with the Government of India. The Government of India and His Majesty's Government no doubt require jute, but do they require as much jute as will be yielded by sowing 8 annas of the recorded jute land in the current season? Certainly not. Secondly, His Majesty's Government and the Government of India cannot be oblivious of the fact that just as jute is necessary for the war and is an essential commodity, so foodstuffs are also as essential, if not more not only for the consumption of those engaged in war service but also to keep the people in general alive. If the people die, if there is a revolution in the country, this will do far more harm in this total war than a reduced production of jute. I would submit that the Ministry grievously failed to represent truly, correctly and honestly the case of Bengal, to the Government of India so far as the fixation of jute quota is concerned.

Then why was this delay? I have already stated that the matter was agitated in September last. When did they take action? When did the Government of India intervene? Why did they not join in consultation with the Government of India early enough, so that there might not be any delay in fixing the quota? Sir, I am sure that licenses have not yet been given to the cultivators. I am sure that licenses have not been given even to a quarter of the jute-growers of Bengal. Now, Sir, everyone knows that the season is already advanced to a certain extent and many cultivators have already sown their lands with jute. Those, who have sown before licenses were granted to them, have sown without reference to any licenses. Therefore many of them have certainly exceeded their quota. What is Government going to do with respect to lands that have already been sown? I am sure, Sir, that they will not be able to finish giving licenses even by

the end of April. This is the state of things that obtains in Bengal, and this is the kind of promptitude with which Government has been tackling such an important problem.

I would only just touch over another matter, namely, about the "Grow More Food" campaign. It has already been said that the "Grow More Food" campaign has been stabbed in the back by fixing 8 annas as the quota of jute. I am not raising this question here. What Government have done is only this, first, some kind of half-hearted paper propaganda has been done. Another thing which was done was certainly useful, namely, distribution of seeds. Sir, so far as last year is concerned, we have already seen the haphazard, perfunctory, and thoughtless way in which distribution of seeds was done, as has been pointed out by my honourable friend Mr. Abdul Karim. But what are they going to do, so far as the current year is concerned? The Hon'ble Minister-in-charge came out with an answer on the floor of the House the other day that distribution of *aus* paddy seeds had not yet commenced. I drew the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the conditions prevailing in the district of Faridpur, in the district of Dacca and also in many districts in North Bengal. There was an absolute failure of *aus* crop and the cultivators have no *aus* seeds. The Hon'ble Minister says that a few days back the department reported that *aus* seeds were not available. If things go on in this way, I do not know where we stand and how the "Grow More Food" campaign is progressing.

(Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur, I do not think it necessary for you to move your motion, because it is exactly the same as motion No. 33 moved by Mr. P. Banerji. It will be better if you speak on it, after the other motions have been moved.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, my motion is about the failure of "Grow More Food" campaign. I want to take this failure of "Grow More Food" campaign along with my other motion regarding cultivation of fallow lands. So, if I can amalgamate these two motions——

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the failure of "Grow More Food" campaign.

Sir, I also beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion to raise a discussion on the cultivation of fallow lands.

Sir, I do not think it is necessary for me to add to the criticisms already made regarding the policy and failure of the "Grow More Food" campaign. My honourable friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan has already advanced some arguments as to why the campaign could not succeed and how this campaign was stabbed in the back by Government in increasing the quota of jute cultivation. I have only one observation to make and it is this that

Government failed because they did not ask for non-official co-operation. Non-official co-operation in a matter like this is of vital importance, but the Government did not invite that co-operation and they did not enlist the assistance and support of non-official organisations either political, economic or educational in the mufassal and one of the chief reasons why this campaign has failed was that they did not ask for non-official co-operation. The question of food is a question which concerns the very well-being and existence of the people of Bengal and therefore party politics should not have entered into it. Irrespective of party allegiance, all organisations in the Presidency would have offered their assistance if Government desired production of more food, but unfortunately owing to shortsightedness Government did not adopt that policy.

So far as future campaign is concerned, unless Government revise their schemes and their policies, I am sure that if they again launch a campaign like this they will fail. A paper propaganda is not what is wanted now. A concrete practical shape to this scheme must be given.

In this connection, Sir, as I have mentioned with regard to the other cut motion about cultivation of fallow land, I have a few suggestions to make. The districts of Nadia and Jessore are practically depopulated. There are vast tracts of barren and fallow land there. An attempt should be made to bring them under cultivation and I have an important suggestion to make and I hope that Government will give due consideration. My suggestion is that Government should move the Government of India, so that they may employ the Army, the soldiers stationed in the districts which are considered to be an invasion area. Now that the danger of invasion has receded to the background, the question of employment of soldiers now lying idle—the huge Army and the reserve of man power—in East Bengal should be taken up. This is not an unusual proposal. In many other countries this procedure has been adopted and therefore I see no reason why the Government of Bengal should not make a start and induce the Government of India to permit the vast reserve of man power now stationed in Bengal to be utilised, so that large tracts of land, both barren and fallow, may be brought under cultivation. If this is done, it will confer a lasting benefit to the province and it will help the province not only during this period of emergency but in time to come, and much land will be available for cultivation of food crops. I hope that this suggestion will be treated by Government with the respect that it deserves and they will try to move the Government of India, so that the latter might permit the soldiers to be so employed.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motions to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. G. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of my motion is to raise a discussion on the "Grow More Food" campaign. "Grow More Food"—what does it mean? What are the staple foods of Bengal? They are rice, fish, *moorgis*, milk, flour, sugar and *dal*—the last three are mostly imported from outside.

Now the question is, where can we expand rice, the principal food? Practically all land in East, South and South-East Bengal is cultivated to the last *bigha*. What is left? North and West Bengal. How much more land can be given over to rice in these two districts?

Population, Sir, and fragmentation of holdings is excessive in all districts, with the exception of some places where malaria has taken a very heavy toll of the population, such as Burdwan. Can anything be done to remedy this?

Irrigation would be necessary and movement of agriculturists to those districts, if they agree to migrate, such as has been done from Mymensingh to Assam during the past 30 or 40 years.

If this were to be done land would have to be leased on nominal terms for at least two years.

In answer to Starred Question No. 127A, the Hon'ble Minister stated that considerable extensions were effected. Where? I ask the Hon'ble Minister, where? I should like to know the districts where this extension for food-growing campaign occurred. The Hon'ble Minister also stated that the drive was intensified more particularly in areas where lands were released from jute.

Jute acreage is normally about one-seventh to one-eighth of the acreage under rice in Bengal. Jute is a valuable cash crop from June to October, that is, during the rains, and we may take it that a minimum of at least 70 lakhs of bales will be produced, whatever restrictive measures may be passed.

Variations between the acreage of rice and of jute generally depend on comparative prices. So that when we come to the question of growing more food, it is a question of planning and is not merely a question of a war time measure. I may mention for example that as a war time measure Mr. Clarke, Deputy Director of Agriculture, came to Kalimpong last week searching for vegetables for the military authorities, but he should have gone up in October. All the land has now been put under its principal cash crop, viz., maize. This shows how stupidly things are being done. This cry of "Grow More Food" is copied from what is being done in western countries where it refers to many different articles of food.

Now, Sir, Government has budgeted for nearly 19 lakhs of rupees for some four schemes, but it seems to me that the schemes are such as should be done ordinarily by the Agriculture Department without any particular slogans or particular expenditure. So far, I can find no practical results, and it seems to be merely on paper.

Paddy and potato seeds were said to have been sold giving credit of Rs. 10½ lakhs. This again seems to be the ordinary work of the Agriculture Department. Rupees 7 lakhs seems to have been distributed in agricultural loans, but this again is merely ordinary departmental activity.

What about fish? What is the Director of Fisheries doing? We have not heard anything about it at all. What is the Director of Agriculture doing about *moorghis* and milk?

I notice from the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" of the 15th instant that the Department of Rural Reconstruction is now taking a hand in the so-called "Grow More Food" campaign. I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister if there is any co-ordination in the Government Departments? What has the Rural Reconstruction Department to do with the crop-growing activities of Government?

Sir, I hope the Hon'ble Minister will give a satisfactory reply to my queries, and that he will declare the policy of Government in this matter of "Grow More Food".

Sir, I move.

Mr. I. A. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion about the necessity for a wider distribution of improved varieties of sugarcane seeds amongst cultivators.

In answer to a question which I recently put in this House the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture stated that in 1941-42 6,100 maunds of seeds of improved varieties were distributed from the Government farms while for the first nine months of 1942-43 the figure was 3,525 maunds. These are very small quantities and unless the distribution of improved varieties is greatly speeded up, it will be a long time before CO 213 has been replaced throughout the province. I am glad to learn, however, from the Hon'ble Minister's reply to my question that in the current year a scheme has been sanctioned for the distribution of 261 lakhs of seed cuttings of CO 421 and 527 on agricultural loan basis and is being given effect to. These cuttings should be sufficient to plant a considerable area of land, and I am glad to be assured that the Government is now tackling the problem in a more energetic manner than previously.

Sir, it has been said in this House more than once that Bengal's sugar industry is capable of expansion. That, in my opinion, will only be possible when the supplies of cane are sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the needs of the factories that do exist. This is certainly not the case at present and in fact the cane shortage problem is becoming more and more acute as time goes on. In my opinion, this is largely, if not entirely, due to the deterioration of the quality known as CO 213. Sugarcane is a money crop and a year or two ago the cultivators in the vicinity of the factory in which I am interested and in other areas as well were very keen on its cultivation. Nowadays this variety—CO 213—gives such poor results in the way of yield and recovery, that is, percentage of sugar, that the cultivator has lost interest in it, while up to now he has not been able to secure seed of improved varieties on any but a very small scale. My own sugar factory has been doing what it can to assist cultivators in the neighbourhood by supplying them with as much seed of improved varieties as it can spare—and I believe that other factories with land of their own are also doing the same thing—but this only touches the fringe of the problem. Government must continue the good work which it is now inaugurating over a period of

years if CO 213 is to be eradicated altogether, as has already been done in the neighbouring provinces of the United Provinces and Bihar. CO 213 is a hybrid and it has gone the way of all hybrids. The improved varieties which I have mentioned are hybrids too and it is very likely that they also will have to be replaced by new varieties in course of time.

Constant experimentation with new varieties and the distribution of adequate quantities of such of them as are found suitable to the conditions prevailing in Bengal are the aims which the Agriculture Department should always have in view. Large additional grants will not be necessary. I do not suggest that cuttings should be given to the cultivators free of cost, which in fact is not the practice, and I make bold to say that there is no reason why they should not be sold at a price sufficient to cover the cost of production. Some expenditure on the acquisition of land will, however, be necessary as the area of the agricultural farms will have to be extended. The Hon'ble Minister in his reply to my question has informed the House that the Agricultural Chemist is in charge of the production and distribution of Government sugarcane seed, that he has only two assistants and that he (the Chemist) has other duties to perform. I would strongly urge that a special officer be appointed to carry out this important work.

In conclusion I would like to point out to the House through you, Sir, that although the production of white sugar is comparatively small at present, there is a large quantity of *gur* made in the province and that sugarcane of good quality is just as important to the *gur* manufacturer as it is to the sugar manufacturer.

Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the failure of Government (*i*) to fix a minimum price of jute at a profitable price, and (*ii*) to raise the price of jute to ameliorate the condition of jute-growers.

মাননীয় স্পীকার মহোদয়, যে বিষয়ের আলোচনা আজ আমি ক'রতে চাই সেই বিষয়টি এই সভাগৃহে নূতন নয়। এই বিষয়ের গুরুত্ব ও প্রয়োজনীয়তা এই সভাগৃহের অধিকাংশ সভ্য বিশেষভাবে উপলব্ধি করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু তবুও একটা cut motion এর দ্বারা এই বিষয়ের আলোচনার সুযোগ গ্রহণ করার কয়েকটি কারণ অবশ্য আছে। বিশ্বব্যাপী মহাসমরের ফলে এবং সেই সমর ভারতের প্রান্ত দেশে উপনীত হওয়ার ফলে আমাদের দেশের অর্থনৈতিক জগতে একটা মহা বিপ্লব সংঘটিত হইয়াছে; যাহার ফলে খাদ্যদ্রব্যসমূহের এবং নিত্য জীবনযাত্রার উপযোগী সর্ব্ববিধ জিনিষের মূল্য অতি মাত্রায় বর্দ্ধিত হইয়াছে। আজ সেই সমস্যার প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিয়া পাটের মূল্য নির্দ্ধারণ এবং বৃদ্ধি করণের বিষয়টী আলোচনা করাও একান্ত প্রয়োজন হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। অনেকে হয়ত জানেন না যে দুই মণ পাট বিক্রী না করিলে একমণ চাউল আজকাল পাওয়া যায় না। বাংলাদেশে এইরূপ অনেক জেলা আছে যেখানে পাটই প্রধানতম শস্য, হয়ত অধিকাংশ জমিতেই পাট ব্যতীত অন্য কোন ফসল হয় না। সেখানকার পাটচাষীদের অবস্থা আজ কিরূপ ভয়াবহ হইয়া পড়িয়াছে সে বিষয়ে আজ বিশেষভাবে চিন্তা করা দরকার। বিগত সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে যখন মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর সমর্থক coalition দলের মিটিং হইয়াছিল সেই

সভায় অনেক মেম্বরের নিকট হইতে এই কথা শুনিয়াছিলাম যে পাটের মূল্য বর্দ্ধিত করার একটা কার্য্যকরী চেষ্টা করা একান্ত প্রয়োজন এবং তদুদ্দেশ্যে সেখানে একটি sub-committee গঠিত হইয়াছিল যে sub-committee কয়েকদিন আলোচনার পরে একটা report দাখিল করিয়াছিল এবং পাটের সর্ব্বনিম্ন মূল্য ১২৲ নির্দ্ধারণ করিয়াছিল এবং বলিয়াছিল যে ভারত গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট হইতে টাকা ধার করিতে হইবে। সেই টাকা দ্বারা বিভিন্ন স্থানে agency নিযুক্ত করিয়া পাট কিনিয়া রাখা হইবে যাহাতে পাটচাষীরা একটা উপযুক্ত মূল্য পাইতে পারে। কিন্তু বড়ই দুঃখের বিষয় এই যে, সেইসব সুপারিশ কার্য্যে পরিণত করা দূরে থাকুক কার্য্যে পরিণত করার কোন চেষ্টাও হইয়াছে বলিয়া আমরা জানি না। আজ খাদ্যদ্রব্য সরবরাহ এবং ইহার মূল্য কমান ইহাই প্রধান এবং প্রথম সমস্যা। তাহার পর বাংলাপ্রদেশের পাটই একমাত্র ফসল যাহা দ্বারা সারা ভারত নয় ভারতের বহির্দ্দেশ হইতেও ভারতবাসী টাকা আনিতে পারে। পাট বাংলার প্রধানতম অর্থকরী ফসল। সেই পাটের মূল্য কি করিয়া বৃদ্ধি করা যায় সেই সমস্যা আমাদের কাছে কোন সমস্যার চেয়ে কম নয়। কিন্তু যে সমস্যা আমাদের প্রধানতম সমস্যা বলিয়া মনে হয় সেই সমস্যা সমাধানের কোনরূপ চেষ্টাই হইতেছে না। আজ সমস্যা হইয়াছে কি করিয়া আসন বণ্টন করা যায়, কি করিয়া সুবিধা-সুযোগ নিজেদের মধ্যে বণ্টন করিয়া লওয়া যায়, কি করিয়া cabinet expand করা যায়। আজ সমস্যা দাঁড়াইয়াছে কি রকম করিয়া লোককে ভাঁওতা দিয়া আসল সমস্যা এড়াইয়া চলা যায়। কিন্তু যাহারা জনসাধারণের প্রতিনিধি তাহারা অবশ্যই একথা স্বীকার করিবেন যে আজ অন্নবস্ত্রের সমস্যাই হইল একমাত্র সমস্যা যাহার জন্য জীবিকানির্ব্বাহ দুর্ব্বিষহ হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। আজ দেশে অন্ন নাই, বস্ত্র নাই। আজ যাহাতে দেশের জনসাধারণের অন্নবস্ত্রের সমস্যার সমাধান করা যায়—তাহারই চেষ্টা করিতে হইবে যাহাতে একটি লোকও আমাদের দেশে অনাহারে প্রাণত্যাগ না করে। আমি মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর কাছে বিশেষতঃ ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের কাছে নিবেদন করিতে চাই তিনি যেন এই বিষয়টি একেবারেই ভুলিয়া না যান। দেশের জনসাধারণকে সন্তুষ্ট রাখিতে হইবে এবং পাটচাষীরা যাহাতে পাটের যথেষ্ট মূল্য পাইতে পারে তাহার চেষ্টা করিতে হইবে।

Mr. W. A. M. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I desire to say a few words with regard to Dr. Sanyal's cut motion relating to the acreage to be sown with jute in 1943-44. I am sorry that I was not in the House when Dr. Sanyal launched his attack on the Indian Jute Mills' Association, but I understand that it was mostly directed against that Association and against Professor Todd.

Now, Sir, since I appear to be the chief culprit in this matter I may tell the House that I am entirely unrepentent because I consider that such advice as I was privileged to offer to the Government was based on the best advice possible for the good of the whole of this province. Dr. Sanyal appears to think that he is dealing with vested interests when he makes his attack. May I remind him through you, Sir, that lakhs of people from upcountry are engaged in the cultivation of jute and this year they will receive no less a sum than at least Rs. 27 crores. In addition to that there are a vast number of people employed by balers upcountry and, last but not least, the industry which I represent employs no less than 300,000 workers. It amazes me, Sir, that year after year members of this House, responsible members of this House, should clamour for a reduction in the

jute acreage. They appear to think that their campaign should be one not of "Grow More Food" but year after year of "Grow Less Jute". I do not understand what their object can be, because they appear to think that by reducing the amount of jute produced in this province they will bring about some miraculous event whereby all the growers will receive enormous prices for their jute. If that is so, they are very much mistaken, because I can assure them that if they force the price of jute up to a very high level it will undoubtedly result in a very much restricted consumption of that fibre and eventually it will lead to economic distress in this province. I do not think that critics of Government's policy have considered the whole economic position with regard to jute. As I have pointed out, the *raiyats* receive 27 crores. The Provincial Government, I estimate, will receive no less than 55 lakhs of rupees in jute tax this year, and they will receive a very handsome share of the export duty and in addition to that a handsome share from income-tax. All these are very important factors to bear in mind, and you must remember that if you reduce the acreage of jute to a small figure—some of the members of this House recommend bringing it even down to almost nothing—that will have very serious financial repercussions on this province. When I suggested to Government that they should legislate for a twelve-anna acreage this year, I did so basing my estimate on what had taken place in the previous year. Members of this House pressed strongly for a five-anna acreage then, but Government agreed to a ten-anna acreage. The fact that they did so has been amply justified by the results. The crop this year amounts to 90 lakhs of bales—well over half of which had been completely disposed of in the six months of the year, and there is no reason to doubt that it will not be completely disposed of and in fact reduce the stocks which were brought forward on the 1st July. I should like the House to tell me, Sir, through you where I should have been when I was approached by the American Government last week to give them suddenly out of my pocket, so to say, 12 crore yards of hessian. Had there been no jute sown, as some members would have wished, I should have to ask the American Government to go somewhere else for their hessian. That would have had very serious repercussions on the whole of the trade and industry of this province. I have also been asked by the Government of India to engage in a very large tentage programme this year. These two items would amount to well over 3½ to 4 lakhs bales. If the production had been restricted on the lines which the members of this House seem to suggest, there would be nothing left at all for me to give to Government against these special demands. I can assure you, Sir, that in asking for what we did we only asked for what we thought could be reasonably consumed by this country and by the other countries to which jute is exported, and I may say, Sir, that I have not the slightest difficulty in maintaining my position in this respect and the position of the Indian Jute Mills Association.

With regard to any connection which Professor Todd may have with the Indian Jute Mills Association, I might disabuse Dr. Sanyal's mind on that point. Professor Todd from time to time issues very useful statements of

the movement of jute and those are made full use of by everybody including my Association. From time to time we consult each other on matters regarding jute production, but I can assure you that he has no connection whatever with any demand that I may have made regarding the acreage of jute.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had no desire to criticise the Government at this stage, but I am constrained to record my protest against the manner of working of the Department of Agriculture. Although India, particularly Bengal, is an agricultural country, the Ministry in this province has no agricultural policy and year after year, the members are amused to find that the Blue Book contains various items like Agricultural Experiment, Rural Uplift Scheme and Propaganda, etc., showing the so-called manifold activities of the department, but even a bird's-eye view of the estimates reveals that almost all the little money that is allotted under the head "Agriculture" is eaten up in paying the cost of establishment. Out of the total amount of 52 lakhs 30 thousand rupees allotted, Sir, only the sum of Rs. 47,250 has been budgeted for special rural uplift scheme, whereas "other charges" including jute restriction scheme will entail an expenditure of Rs. 33,99,500. The sum of Rs. 3,30,500 to be spent under agricultural experiment and research will be mostly spent on pay and allowances of the officers. As a matter of fact, the department is being maintained as a mere show and no constructive programme is being seriously followed.

Sir, today, agriculture has come to the forefront because it is being felt too late in the day that something must be done to improve the state of affairs. I have already said on a previous occasion that "Grow More Food" is a recent slogan, and a lot of good money has been spent on paper propaganda. But, Sir, you will be surprised to learn that up to February, 1943, the following seeds are said to have been distributed by the Rural Reconstruction Department in connection with the "Grow More Food" campaign and God alone knows what is the actual figure and to whom the same has been distributed. I have yet to learn, if distribution has been made to the needy, or as usual official nepotism prevailed. Sir, here are the figures—

	Maunds.
Aman paddy	19,854
Mustard	4,127
Lentil	7,826
Grain	7,192
Potato	100,000

I understand, Sir, that the department has not yet received any authentic report regarding the increase or otherwise in the area under food-crops during the last season. I am also told that as regards the continuance of the campaign during this year, the question is still under consideration of Government. Sir, is this not an apology of carrying on a "Grow More Food" campaign in a province where some 2 crores 80 lakhs acres are under

cultivation and where over 60 millions of the population are dependent on the land? Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge please tell the House, if good manure in abundant quantity has been distributed and if there has been any attempt to educate the cultivators with a view to inducing them to utilize the same? Did the Hon'ble Minister take a stock of requirements and make proper arrangements for supply? It is a common knowledge, Sir, that oilcakes and bonemeal are good manure for rice and for the last many months it has been felt that more rice must be grown in this province. But did the department formulate any definite plan for an adequate distribution of manure up till now? I know, Sir, no satisfactory reply will come from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this much neglected department. During the "Grow More Food" campaign much was said about the method of "composting"—a very cheap method of manuring. I would like to know if any attempt has been made to introduce this cheap manuring process to the cultivators in the rural area.

Sir, it is no exaggeration to say that today Bengal, the granary of India, is facing starvation and the agriculturists who were able to sow paddy are not able to reap the advantage of the inflated price, thanks to the policy of the present and the erstwhile Ministry, which was responsible for stifling rural credit to death by enacting a series of absurd Bills. Today, the agriculturists are selling their cattle and the little movable properties they had, and I can tell the House that most of them will be compelled to sell their lands too if things continue like this.

In this connection, Sir, I want to inform the House that I have received the pathetic stories of miseries of lakhs of cultivators from the flood-affected areas in the district of Midnapore. The people are starving and the cultivators have neither their plough cows nor the required seeds. Unless immediate steps are taken to help the cultivators in those areas, so that they may plough and sow the seeds, a greater havoc will occur in the area in course of a few months. Everybody knows that cattle in the flood-affected area has almost all perished and mere nibbling at the problem will not help. Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge tell the House how many cultivators have been provided with plough cows? Then, Sir, even where the cultivators are able to produce in the old-fashioned way, they do not get a fair price simply because the Government in this country has not organised proper marketing facilities for the disposal of the cultivators' produce. The cultivators are helpless as to the fixation of the price and are compelled to part with their produce at a price dictated by others.

Sir, nor has the Government taken any steps for bringing waste lands under cultivation beyond issuing cartloads of leaflets. A very practical step is to induce cultivators to till these lands, so that more food is produced in the country. But, Sir, may I ask what has been done by the Ministry to encourage people to grow crops on cultivable waste lands? The Government has to promise not to charge any assessment for the next few years. I am confident that pioneers will come forward from among the educated middle class, if proper facilities and co-operation are promised by the Government.

Sir, today sugar is a rare article in this province and it is deplorable that practically nothing has been done by the Government to grow sugarcane in abundant quantities in the province, so that the existing sugar mills could find enough sugarcane to crush. Sir, even under this sham constitution, the erstwhile ministries in the United Provinces and Bihar did a lot for improving the cultivation of sugarcane, but in Bengal nothing has been done in this behalf, with the result that we have to depend on other provinces for sugar supply. Meanwhile, the energies of the Ministry are being dissipated over questions, which do not affect the poor cultivator at all.

I mentioned the other day, Sir, that the jute policy of the Government is decided not in the Secretariat but somewhere in Clive Street, and the President of the Indian Jute Mills Association will bear me out when I say that owing to the pressure of the Jute Trade, the Ministry was compelled to amend their original ideas as to provide an eight-anna sowing in place of a 5½-anna sowing for 1943-44. But I do not know, Sir, on what basis this decision to increase the acreage from one-third to one-half was arrived at. Did the Ministry collect any data as to the minimum requirement of food crop in the province? Were they satisfied that enough rice would be grown in the land released under the scheme?

Then, Sir, the cultivators have not been properly advised as to what alternative crops they may grow to their benefit. It is evident that no survey was made of the jute area from this point of view. A host of Jute Restriction Officers have been appointed to carry out the scheme of restriction, but did it ever strike the Government that these appointments should have been made with a view to helping the cultivators to grow an alternative crop? More attention was devoted at the time of these appointments on the question of ratio among the Caste Hindus, Muhammadans and the Scheduled Castes as also distribution of patronage and nobody had any time to think how best the services of these men could be utilised. I must say, Sir, the Government has no imagination and has the knack of not doing the right thing at the right time. It is admitted that to increase production, to improve the quality of the crops, to educate agriculturists as to what kind of crops to grow, the introduction of more remunerative crops, the consolidation of holdings, cattle improvement, veterinary and animal husbandry facilities, better food for cattle and pasturage and establishment of necessary organisations to secure the cultivators better prices—these are matters which require a careful planning of an ambitious programme, and some years to achieve tangible results. But, Sir, when I find that since 1937, one after another Finance Minister has been trotting out the same old argument and advising the public to wait, I wonder, if the man behind the plough will live to see any appreciable change in his life or will be able to die with the hope that at least his descendants will be provided with two square meals. I find, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister undertakes an extensive tour every month, but I wonder what benefit these costly tours bring to the poor cultivators.

Sir, I find that there is nothing constructive in the budget for the Department of Agriculture and there is no attempt to lay the foundation of

any new programme. Sir, the signs of the time are menacing enough and the members had a foretaste only yesterday. I can only warn that the situation may be made more serious and beyond control. I must say that the Government should treat the problem of saving the cultivators as also the poor consumers from utter ruin as more important than even Civil Defence and money must be found to give immediate relief to the much worshipped but ever neglected man behind the plough.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had no intention to speak this evening, but I want to confine myself to some general remarks regarding the plan and policy of the Agriculture Department during war time. The Agriculture Department of this Government has not taken any initiative in the matter of making any plan or scheme during war time. It seems from the plan adopted in Great Britain that they have achieved success in their various schemes and have been able to give sufficient relief to their men. Just after the last war, 1914-18, they started making plans and decided that they must depend on their own production and must discourage the import of food from other countries. Similarly, our Government should have done the same thing, when the war began and Burma was threatened by the Japanese and it was known to the Government that the rice produced in Bengal was not sufficient to meet the demands of the people of Bengal and that the deficit used to be made up by import of rice from Burma. Government knew all this but, in spite of that, they failed to do anything of the kind. They only started issuing handbills and leaflets with the slogan "Grow More Food". May I ask Government whether there is any special thing in the slogan which will create manure and will help to solve the problem? Their propaganda has produced nothing.

If you look, Sir, at other countries you will understand how the work is carried on there. I am just going to mention something about what has been done in Great Britain. British agricultural policy is concerned with obtaining increased amount of food from the land first by bringing grass and derelict land into cultivation and second by increasing the productivity of the existing cultivated land.

Increase of domestic production was also within the plan. One of the most obvious ways of increasing domestic production of food is to put the plough to grass land, since in most cases more food for men and animals can be produced per acre on arable land than on grass land. During the war some three million acres of grass land were ploughed up in the United Kingdom. And it is also a very nice thing to know that there was a shortage of labour, and agricultural labourers were not allowed to join any other concerns. They were specially retained for that purpose, and the Education Department allotted 10,000 students to help them.

Farmers were encouraged to drain their land and restore or improve existing drainage systems. Grants are made for the improvement of minor arterial water-courses for the field drainage. Government advances covering the whole cost of some drainage works are made, fifty per cent. of which is regarded as an outright grant and the remainder recoverable over a period

of five years. I do not know, Sir, whether anything has been done by this Government. As far as I know, no attempt has been made to encourage the farmers to drain or improve their lands.

Then as regards credit facilities, the actual execution of the Government programme of increasing production rests in the lands of individual farmers. These men must have funds with which to buy or rent the equipment and labour they need on their farms and this equipment and labour must be made available. The ploughing up of additional land resulted in an increased demand for agricultural credit. All the Joint Stock Banks decided during the first weeks of the war to liberalise their policy of agricultural loans. Government, therefore, set up an Agricultural Requisites Assistance Scheme to enable farmers to procure Government loans for specific purposes. Loans are made at 5 per cent. for short periods and are administered by Agricultural Executive Committee. The scope of the scheme was extended to include loans to finance ditching, field drainage, manuring and the purchase of goods required for farming operations.

Sir, in this country nothing of the sort was attempted.

(At this stage the member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Srijut ASHUTOSH MULLICK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধান প্রসঙ্গে দিন কয়েক পূর্ব্বে কত কত বক্তৃতাই না মাঠে মারা গেছে তার ইয়ত্তা নাই। কিন্তু সে মাঠ অনুর্ব্বর, উষর পতিত এমন কি গোচর পতিত নহে—একেবারে ব্রহ্মডাঙা। তা না হ'লে এত এত উর্ব্বর মস্তিষ্কপ্রসূত ব্যাপক পরিকল্পনা সেখানে মরেছে অথচ তাদের অস্থিচর্ম্ম-সার তাকে উর্ব্বর করতে পারে নাই। ফলে দুর্ব্বাটিও যে গজাবে তাও মনে হয় না। "চাষ করে সকলে কিন্তু ফসল হয় কপালে" যেন আর এক দফা প্রমাণিত হ'ল। এই সব আলোচনাতেও Governmentএর Grow More Food campaign এর বিষয়ে গুটি দুই কথা বলার প্রয়োজন মনে করি—যদিচ কুটিল রাজনীতির জটিল অবস্থায় দেখা যায় মতের বহুতর স্তর জমে আছে; কোনটা মসজিদের মত, মন্দিরের মত নহে, কোনটা চার্চের মত, চর্চার মত নহে, কোনটা সভার মত, ঘরের মত নহে, কোনটা দলের মত অন্তরের মত নহে। কোন মতে চোখ দিয়া জল বাহির হয় কিন্তু রাজকোষ হইতে টাকা বাহির হয় না, অথচ কাজ চলে, কিন্তু হৃদয়ে তার স্থান নাই ফ্যাসানেই তার প্রতিষ্ঠা। তথাপি Governmentএর এই Grow More Food অভিযানের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বিষয়ে আমাদের কাহারও দ্বিমত নাই। এ বিষয়ে আমরা সকলেই একমত। সরকারের উদ্দেশ্য সাধু ও সুমহৎ কিন্তু যে নীতি অবলম্বনে এই অভিজানের বিজয়রথ চলে তার বিরুদ্ধে বলার অনেক কিছু আছে। যে নীতি অনুসারে এই অভিজান চলে তাতে এক কথায় ইহা একটা Governmentএর হুজুগ। বাংলার কোন কোন জেলার সরকারী কর্ম্মচারিগণের "মাথা নাই অথচ মাথা ব্যাথা' গোছের কতকগুলি নাচুনে জিনিষ লইয়া নাচন আরম্ভ করবেন ফলে বিশেষ কিছু হয় নাই, অথচ অতি সামান্য একটা কিছু হয়েছে আর সেটাকে লইয়া সকলে নাচ্‌তে সুরু করবেন। এই হুজুগের ডালপালা খুব বিস্তৃত কিন্তু শিকড়ের দিকের অভাব। কিংবা Government এই বিষয়টার কড়ায় কড়া কাহনে কাণা" অর্থাৎ কড়ার প্রতি অতিরিক্ত দৃষ্টি রাখিতে গিয়া কাহনের প্রতি ঢিলা দিয়াছেন। তার ফল এই হয়েছে প্রাণপণ আঁটুনির ত্রুটি নাই কিন্তু গ্রন্থিটি শিথিল। এই বিষয়টার মূলেই Governmentএর সহানুভূতির অভাব অথচ অনুষ্ঠানের ত্রুটি নাই।

সেদিনকার সেই খাদ্য-সমস্যা বনাম চাল দেওয়া প্রসঙ্গের পুনরুল্লেখে দু'একটা কথা এই ছাঁটাই প্রস্তাব আলোচনায় অপ্রাসঙ্গিক হবে না। সকলেরই বোধ হয় জানা আছে ইংরাজের চালের কাছে (British Policy) ভগবান পর্য্যন্ত বান্‌চাল হয়ে যান। ফলে বাংলার ঘরে হাঁড়িতে চাল নাই, চালে খড় নাই কারুর একচালা ঘর নাই। যদিও বা কারুর কারুর দোচালা ঘর আছে কিন্তু চার চাল বজায় করার ক্ষমতা নাই, আবার অনেকের আকাঁড়া কাঁড়া চালের বিচার নাই। অথচ একদিন ছিল ইতিহাস বলে বাংলার সায়েস্তা খাঁর আমলে নাকি টাকায় আট মণ চাল ছিল যার বর্ত্তমান বাজার দর প্রায় ২০০৲ টাকা। এথেকে মনে হয় আমাদের কর্ম্মকর্ত্তাগণ অব্যবস্থিতচিত্ত। তাদের আপাতঃ প্রত্যক্ষ প্রাসাদের উপরও আস্থা রাখা চলে না। সেদিনের সেই আলোচনায় বাঁধা চালে বাংলা সরকার বোড়ের কিস্তির মাৎ সাম্‌লালো কিন্তু শেষে সেটা এমনি বেচাল ঘটলো যে ঘানিতে গিয়ে পেঁছালো। ফলে যে তেল বাহির হ'ল তা নাকে দিয়ে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়গণ খানিকটা নিশ্চিন্তে ঘুমোতে পারেন কিন্তু তার দ্বারা আলো জ্বালাইবার সাধ্য নাই। গৃহস্থ যদি পরের পেখম পুচ্ছ গুজিয়া ঘরের মধ্যে অনৈক্য বিস্তার করেন তাহ'লে সেটা কেবল ঘরের পক্ষে আপশোষের বিষয় নহে পরের পক্ষে হাস্যেরও বিষয় হয়ে উঠে।

সরকার বাহাদুরের অকান্ত কর্ম্মচারিগণ এই অভিজ্ঞানের পরিচালনায় শুধু প্রচার-কার্য্যেই অত্যধিক চিন্তা শক্তি, প্রয়োজন নাই অথচ প্রয়োগ করেন। ফলে অনেক সময় চিন্তনীয় বিষয় সম্পূর্ণ অতিক্রম করিয়া চিন্তার অতীত স্থানে গিয়া পেঁছান। মহাবীর হনুমান যদি অতিরিক্ত মাত্রায় লঙ্ঘন শক্তি প্রয়োগ করিতেন তাহ'লে তিনি সমুদ্র ডিঙাইয়া লঙ্কায় না পড়িয়া লঙ্কা ডিঙাইয়া সমুদ্রে পড়িতে পারিতেন—অন্যান্য সকল শক্তির ন্যায় তাঁদের প্রচার-কার্য্য বিষয়েও চিন্তাশক্তিরও সংযম আবশ্যক। আসলে যে সকল উপায় অবলম্বনে বাস্তবিক বাংলাদেশের অনাবাদী জমিতে খাদ্যশস্যের ফসল জন্মায় এবং প্রচুর পরিমাণে জন্মায় তার দিকে লক্ষ্য থাকা চাই। তার জন্য কৃষকদিগকে উত্তম বীজ দাদন দিতে হইবে, চাষাবাদের জন্য কৃষকদিগকে অগ্রিম ঋণ দিতে হইবে, জলসেচনের সুব্যবস্থা করিতে হইবে। এ সবের দিকে সরকারের কোন লক্ষ্য নাই, কেবলমাত্র ভুয়ো প্রচার-কার্য্যে অর্থশ্রাদ্ধ করা হচ্ছে। আমি নিজে এমন দৃষ্টান্ত দিতে পারি যে গত বৎসর বাঁকুড়া জেলার কোন কোন থানায় চাষীদিগকে যে বীজ-ধান্য দাদন দেওয়া হইয়াছিল তাহাতে মোটেই চারা বাহির হয় নাই, ফলে বীজ বপনের সদিচ্ছা ব্যর্থ হওয়ায় এবং পুনবায় বীজবপনের সুবর্ণ সুযোগ না পাওয়ায় সেই সেই অঞ্চলের কৃষকদের প্রভূত ক্ষতি হইয়াছিল।

আবার এমনও দেখা যায় বরকর্ত্তার তত্ত্বাবধানের ফলে অষ্টমঙ্গলার পরের দিন মালাকার মহাসমারোহে টোপর এনে হাজির করে। প্রসঙ্গক্রমে জেনারেল হনুমানের শতযোজনবিস্তৃত লাঙুলের প্রান্তদেশে যদি কখনও উকুনে কামড় দিত তখন তিনি তা চুলকাইবার জন্য বিদ্যুৎ বেগবান অশ্বারোহী সৈন্য নিযুক্ত ক'রেছিলেন কি না কে জানে? কিন্তু যদি তাঁকে Government ক্রমিক পর্য্যায়ের আভিজাত্য (Red-tapism) বজায় রেখে চল্‌তে হ'ত তাহ'লে তাঁর দুর্দ্দশার সীমা থাকত না। আসল কথা এই যে ভ্রমক্রমেও এ বিভাগে যথা সময়ে যথা কর্ত্তব্য করা হয় না। Governmentএর "Grow More Food" অভিযানের কর্ম্মপদ্ধতির আমূল পরিবর্ত্তন হওয়া প্রয়োজন। আমাদের অদ্য কল্যকার বিরোধী। সকালে যাহা সত্য বিকালে তাহা সত্য নহে কিন্তু কি আশ্চর্য্য এত বিরোধের মধ্যে থাকিয়াও সরকারের মত পরিবর্ত্তন হয় না। তাই মনে হয় ওটা যেন একটা কলের পুতুল যতবার দম দেওয়া যাবে ততবার একাই

নাচন নাচবে। উপসংহারে আর গুটি দুই কথা বলে আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করি। আমি সমস্ত কৃষি বিভাগের কথা বলছি না। এই বিভাগের এই Grow More Food অংশটা যদি বাংলা সরকারের নবগঠিত খাদ্য-সরবরাহ দপ্তরে স্থান পায় তাহলে ভাল হইত যেহেতু তাদের পরস্পরের সম্বন্ধ তর্জনীর সহিত মধ্যম অঙ্গুলীর অপেক্ষা অধিক নহে। অবশ্য লাঙ্গলের ফলার লোহা হইতে ছুঁচ তৈরী হতে পারে, তাইবলে সেই ছুঁচ দিয়ে মাটি চষিবার কথা বলছি না, কিন্তু পরস্পর ঘনিষ্টতা এত বেশী যে এককে আরের সহিত পৃথক করতে গেলে উভয়েরই অসোয়াস্তি ভোগ ক'রতে হবে। তা'ছাড়া প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের প্রতিশ্রুত নবানুষ্ঠিত নববিধানে অনুব্রহ্ম লাভ হবে ব'লে অনেকেই আশা রাখে। পরামর্শ সমিতির গবেষণায় সদুপদেশও মিলতে পারে এবং সে পথে চললে হয়ত গন্তব্য স্থানে পেঁছান যেতে পারে। যেহেতু মন্ত্রণা যার চাই, তাকে মন্ত্রী করা চলে না—কিন্তু ভয় হয় পাছে, মন্ত্রণা দেওয়াই যার কাজ তার মন্ত্রণা কোন রাজার ভালো না লাগে। এত এত নূতন নূতন উপায় উদ্ভাবনের পরও যদি খাদ্য-সমস্যার একটা কিছু সমাধান হয় তবেই সমস্ত চেষ্টা সার্থক হবে—নাহলে ততঃ কিম্! ততঃ কিম্! ততঃ কিম্!

Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall not take much valuable time of this House, but I do not know whether I shall be able to finish my speech within the short time allotted to me.

Sir, I wish to speak only on the matter of distribution of *aus* paddy seeds. Sir, the *aman* crop has failed. The rural people are now badly in need of *aus* paddy seeds, but the Government have up till now made no arrangement for its distribution. Sir, if no arrangement is being made by the Government in this direction and if the *aus* crop of this year fails then there will not only be a terrible famine but there will be an outbreak of epidemic diseases and widespread unrest among the people as a result of starvation. People will revolt for want of food and there will be social disorganisation and chaos in the province. The whole structure of administration may be shaken by the unrest of the rural people.

Sir, I shall now say a few words on the "Grow More Food" campaign. I do not know why no money has been provided for "Grow More Food" campaign for the coming year. Sir, the money that was provided in the last budget was properly spent and did encourage the people to grow more food——

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed to speak for two minutes more.)

In the budget we are now discussing Government have not provided any money for the "Grow More Food" campaign. It definitely shows the unwillingness, want of determination and want of sympathy on the part of Government to improve the economic condition of the agriculturists and thereby to improve the condition of the rural people in general. If Government in this way again and again fail to do their most important duty of improving the condition of the rural people by not giving timely help to them to grow more food then, I think, the Government will have to suffer much in future for this sort of inactivity on their part. Sir, Government have done and have been doing many good things in many other directions, but I do not know the reason why Government is purposely neglecting the rural masses in the province.

Mr. SYED MUSTAGAWSAL HAQUE: Sir, I had no mind to participate in this debate today, but because of the fact that agriculture is a question of most vital importance at the present time when we are faced with a serious problem the like of which we had never seen before, I am prompted to say a few words on this subject. A huge amount is budgeted for maintaining a large number of highly paid officers—men who are most unsympathetic in the matter of uplifting the economic condition of the rural masses. To cite an instance, the Director of Agriculture always stands in the way of the progress of agriculture of which I have had some personal knowledge. The Daulatpur Agricultural College was established at a huge cost, and we expected that much would be done by the Agriculture Department. But due to the unsympathetic attitude of the Director of Agriculture nothing could be done. Sir, this is my definite complaint against this Department of Agriculture and against the Director of Agriculture, and I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge to take note of this. Sir, Government could spend Rs. 6 or 7 lakhs for the establishment of this college, but nothing has since been done by the Director of Agriculture for this institution.

Then, Sir, so far as the question of "Grow More Food" campaign is concerned, we highly appreciate the move of Government in this direction, but I submit the policy and the method adopted to push forward this campaign are entirely wrong and are bound to be a failure. The only activity of the department that we could find so far was the distribution of pamphlets and leaflets from the headquarters and nothing else. If Government is really serious to tackle this problem, I think it ought to be the duty of Government to have a survey of the entire area of Bengal made under three different heads—

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit, but was allowed to conclude his speech in two minutes.)

The land should be divided into three categories, land already under cultivation, land unfit for cultivation and land which is culturable but is not at present under cultivation.

Then, Sir, I shall speak a few words on the question of jute. The Indian Central Jute Committee contributes a huge sum of Rs. 53,000 for the Jute Department but the officers of the department are entirely worthless and doing nothing, and I am sure honourable members who have any idea of the working of this department will bear me out. I would therefore appeal to Government to see that these officers devote their time and attention to the activities of this department and if that is done I am sure it will benefit the people immensely.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED : Mr. Speaker, Sir, গভর্ণমেণ্ট এ বৎসর পাটের রেকর্ড জমির আট আনাতে পাট বুনানীর সিদ্ধান্ত করায় সমস্ত দেশে একটা ভীতির সঞ্চার হয়েছে সন্দেহ নাই। এটা সত্য কথা যে আমরা প্রোগ্রেসিভ কোয়ালিশন পার্টির যাঁরা মেম্বর তাঁরা এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের দ্বারা প্রতিষ্ঠিত জুট এডভাইসরি কমিটি সকলেই গভর্ণমেণ্টের কাছে অনুরোধ জানাইছিলেন যে এবৎসর পাটের জমি কমান হউক। তা ছাড়া আমাদের কৃষক প্রজাসমিতির পক্ষ থেকে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অনুরোধ

করা হয়েছিল যে পাঁচ আনা জমির বেশীতে যেন পাট বুনানী না হয়। এই সমস্তই সত্য, তার উপর দেশে বর্ত্তমানে খাদ্যাভাবে যে ভয়াবহ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে তৎসম্পর্কে সকলেই অবগত আছেন। এমন কি দেশের বিভিন্ন স্থানে খাদ্যাভাবে লোক যে মারা যাচ্ছে সে খবর আমরা প্রতিদিন পাচ্ছি। আমি আমার জামালপুর সব্‌ডিভিসনের কথা বল্‌তে পারি, সরিষাবাড়ী অঞ্চল এবং জামালপুরের অন্যান্য জায়গা থেকে দুখানি টেলিগ্রাম এবং ৪।৫ খানি চিঠি পেয়েছি যে সেখানে লোক না খেয়ে মারা গিয়েছে এবং আমার বিশ্বাস সেরকম টেলিগ্রাম মাননীয় প্রধান মন্ত্রী সাহেবও সেখান থেকে পেয়েছেন। এই যে দেশের ভয়াবহ অবস্থা এ সম্পর্কে যদি আমরা এর কিছু প্রতীকার কর্‌তে চাই তবে শুধু পাটের জমি কমানোই যে তার প্রতীকার হবে এ বিশ্বাস আমি করি না। কারণ, যখন আট আনা কেন ষোল আনা জমিতে পাট হত তখনও দেশের এরকম ভয়াবহ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয় নি। শুধু পাটের জমি এবার ।।০ আনা করা হয়েছে বোলে দেশে এরকম ভয়ানক অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে এ বিশ্বাস আমি করি না। আমার বিশ্বাস আছে যে আমরা কোয়ালিশনপার্টির মেম্বর, এড্‌ভাইসরি কমিটীর এবং বিভিন্ন সমিতি বা organisation এর কম জমিতে পাট বুনানীর মত প্রকাশ করা সত্ত্বেও গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে ।।০ আনা জমিতে পাট বুনানীর সিদ্ধান্ত ক'রেছেন তখন গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিশ্চয়ই বুঝ্‌তে পেরেছেন যে খাদ্যশস্যের মূল্য যেরকম বেড়ে গেছে সেই অনুপাতে আগামী পাটের ফসলও উপযুক্ত মূল্য আন্‌তে পার্‌বে এবং এই জিনিস যখন বুঝেছেন তখনই বোধ হয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট এই সিদ্ধান্ত ক'রেছেন। আমি opposition partyর পক্ষ থেকে যাঁরা cut motion এনেছেন বিশেষ কোরে ডাক্তার নলিনাক্ষ সান্যাল মহাশয়কে বল্‌তে চাই যে গভর্ণমেণ্ট আট আনা জমিতে পাট বুনানীর সিদ্ধান্ত ক'রেছেন সত্য, কিন্তু এর চেয়েও কম পরিমাণ জমিতে লোক পাট বুন্‌তে পারে, সে স্বাধীনতা গভর্ণমেণ্ট হরণ করেন নি। কাজেই আমরা সকলে মিলে এবং বিভিন্ন দলের লোক সকলে গিয়ে দেশে পাট চাষ কমানর চেষ্টা কর্‌তে পারি।

(The member having reached the time-limit, resumed his seat.)

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I wish to say a few words in order to make the Government position regarding this question absolutely clear. Sir, there is a good deal of misapprehension about the implications of fixation of jute acreage every year. As the House is well aware what is meant amounts only to this, that a cultivator will be entitled to cultivate the maximum of 8 annas, but it is open to him to sow 5 annas or 3 annas or less or even he may not sow any jute at all. It is therefore not mandatory, and although people want to be popular with the peasantry by raising all sorts of false issues, the fixation of 8 annas acreage does not mean that the cultivator is under any obligation to sow his land up to 8 annas with jute.

Now, Sir, the question is capable of different interpretations. On the one hand, more jute means less foodstuffs, but at the same time we have to remember that Bengal gets from the Central Government as a portion of the jute export duty a magnificent sum amounting now up to about 2 crores of rupees. If there is less jute there is less export and the amount that we get from the Central Government is proportionately reduced. The

position, therefore, is this: although we have fixed 8 annas acreage it is well known that this is only the maximum. Secondly, we have had abundant evidence after the matter had been explored very carefully that the jute that will be produced will all be absorbed in consequence of the demand which is certain to be made in markets outside India. The cultivator, therefore, will have an opportunity of getting money on the jute which he produces. At the same time Bengal finances will be replenished to a large extent by reason of the amount of money that we will get from the Central Government.

Now, Sir, I do not understand why so much capital is made out of the area that is fixed annually by Government. The cultivator himself wants to sow as much jute as possible in his land. Experience has shown that although the maximum is fixed and the cultivator has got the voluntary option to sow the lowest quantity of jute, he seldom keeps his acreage fixed on jute, he goes up to the maximum himself, which shows that he is in favour of sowing more jute, because he knows that by that means he will get some money in order to cover his expenses, at any rate his household expenses. The sowing of jute does not necessarily mean any interference with the growth of a large amount of paddy. Both can go together and I, therefore, think, Sir, it is wrong to assume that Government acted in a way detrimental to the interests of the cultivator.

Sir, it was from September onwards that we have been in constant communication with the Government of India and we have had assurances from the Government of India and from those who are in a position to help us in times of difficulty that they will come forward to the help of the Bengal peasantry, if our anticipations are not fulfilled or if for some reasons the price of jute goes below a reasonable limit. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How?) There are many ways of doing it. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Do they guarantee a maximum price?) There are hundreds of ways of helping the cultivator.

Now, Sir, the position, therefore, is that while the cultivator is at liberty to sow up to the maximum of 8 annas, he is also at liberty to sow less if he likes. If, in consequence of any adverse circumstances, we find that the cultivator is not getting money we thought he would be getting on jute, we will, as I have said, be helped by the Government of India in order to get over this difficulty; on the other hand, if we had not fixed the maximum of 8 annas and fixed the maximum at a lower rate, we would have the entire responsibility of meeting any adverse situation if it arose. At the present moment we can go up to the Government of India because it is on the basis of some assurances we have got that we fixed the acreage at 8 annas. If we had disregarded the advice given by the Government of India, we would have been in difficulty, and we would have been put out of the court altogether.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The old grandmother has no more milk to give!

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, there are many ways of proving that one is a friend of the peasantry of Bengal. One of the easiest ways is to shout and say "Don't do this: *don't do that,*" *but these are all slogans and there is no sense in them*: they do not really help the cultivator. The cultivator has got to sow jute and he has got to get a good market. We are not unmindful of the interests of the cultivator, and we shall see that he gets a good market. We know all the interests of the cultivator. The cultivator himself wants to sow at least 8 annas jute. Whatever people may say, we have found that if the option is given, he may go up to 12 annas. That shows that he knows his interests much better than those in this House who shout for the interests of the cultivator.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: As you are giving them food! Here are telegrams——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Here are telegrams that the cultivators are happy with their 8 annas quota.

Sir, if the acreage had been fixed at 4 annas, all these telegrams would have come all the same. Telegrams come due to different causes. It is not for me to argue with anybody.

I say, Sir, that while people advocate a policy of less acreage for jute, they forget that thereby they might endanger the help that they might get from other quarters—people who have befriended them in times of difficulty.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who are they? Europeans?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must say that Europeans purchase jute more than I do. So, I think they are friends of the cultivators in this respect.

I do not think that the proposition is complicated at all. I know my friend Dr. Sanyal has threatened that he will publish in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* the names of those who will vote against this cut motion. We are not afraid of that. We are prepared to say in all conscience that we have done the best thing possible in the interests of the cultivator by fixing the acreage at 8 annas. I make this statement deliberately. Let any newspaper publish it. I am as much a friend of the cultivator as anyone else in this House. I have considered the question from all points of view, and I say that it would have been dangerous if we had not fixed the acreage at 8 annas. If we had disregarded the Government of India, if we had disregarded the wishes of His Majesty's Government at home, we would have been thrown entirely on our own resources and my friend Dr. Sanyal would not have been able to raise the cultivator out of the mire. We have done as best as we could under the circumstances, and I say, Sir, that there is no risk to the cultivators of Bengal by the Government's fixing the acreage at 8 annas.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Convince your party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hashem Ali, do you want to add anything?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No. Sir.

The motion of Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. I. A. Clark that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Abdul Karim that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. G. Morgan that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Mahammed Ali that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and a division taken with the following results:—

AYES—16.

Banerji, Mr. P.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra
Mukherjee, Mr. B.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath.
Sen-Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.

NOES—78.

Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clarke, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.

Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Mcpherson, Mr. G. P.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islambadi, Maulana Md.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukerjea, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Mustagawsai Haque, Mr. Syed.
Norton, Mr. H. R.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan.
Thorman, Mr. C. M.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yousuf Mirza.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 10 and the Noes 78, the motion was lost.

The motion of Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerji that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Abdul Karim that the demand of Rs. 51,54,000 for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan that a sum of Rs. 51,54,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "40—Agriculture" was then put and agreed to.

41—Veterinary.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 7,80,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "41—Veterinary".

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 7,80,000 for expenditure under the head "41—Veterinary" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to start a larger number of veterinary dispensaries in the interior of the country. My object is not to censure the Government, but to draw the pointed attention of the Government to certain practical suggestions I shall be making here for Government's serious consideration.

Sir, it need hardly be said that good and healthy cattle are the backbone of the peasantry who again are the backbone of the country. A

mainly agricultural country as Bengal is, she has to depend upon healthy cattle for her agricultural produce. The more healthy the cattle, the greater will be the outturn of agricultural products. It has been found from experience that when the furrows are wide and deep the land yields a greater outturn of crops than when the furrows are thin and narrow. These furrows depend solely on the capacity of the cattle that draw the plough. For a prosperous and healthy peasantry healthy and able-bodied cattle are indispensable.

Sir, in the campaign for "Grow More Food" cattle of the country play a very important part. If cattle are thin and diseased, you cannot expect to get as much outturn of crops as when the cattle are strong and able-bodied.

Sir, it is admitted on all hands that agriculturists are the producers of the country's wealth and in this matter cattle are a concommitant factor. If this essential factor is neglected, the whole country suffers.

Sir, in the wider interests of the country, although the Veterinary Department deserves to be first looked after and properly nourished, strange it is that this department is the most famished department of the Government of Bengal. Government have chosen to keep this department in an obscure corner and the wider public have been given very little opportunity to know about its activities.

A provision of Rs. 8,12,000 for an important department like the Veterinary Department is absolutely inadequate—rather it is a drop in the ocean. This only shows the appalling lack of imagination and want of sympathy of the present Ministry for the man behind the plough. Sir, if the Ministry really means to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry, if the Ministry believes in the "Grow More Food" campaign, then the cattle of the country must be improved and must be kept free from all disease. This requires more money.

Sir, it will not be out of place to mention here that our peasants are alarmingly illiterate and care little to know if there are medicines for cattle disease at all. On the other hand, Government also neglected to popularise the department amongst the agricultural masses. It was only after the assumption of office by the present Director of the Veterinary Department that the matter took altogether a different turn. The whole department got rejuvenated. Extensive propaganda for improved and healthy cattle and to fight cattle disease was made throughout the length and breadth of the country. Agriculturists also came to learn that their very valuable property, viz., cattle, could be saved from disease and from appalling death rate by medicines.

Sir, in the year 1940 the present Veterinary Director, who is gifted with imagination, breadth of vision and sympathy, submitted a beneficent scheme before the Government for fighting cattle epidemics and various other diseases and thus improving the cattle of the country. The scheme is very modest, and its financial implications also are not big; the scheme, if properly worked out, is pregnant with immense possibilities. The

scheme aims at starting a network of rural veterinary dispensaries. The plan is laid down as follows: Eighteen rural dispensaries are to be started in selected centres in the countryside, to be manned by a doctor who will undergo training for 6 months either in the Bengal Veterinary College or in other hospitals. The cost of running such dispensaries will be Rs. 400 annually including the doctor's pay and medicines. Herbs available in the countryside will constitute the main item of medicines. So, eighteen dispensaries at the rate of Rs. 400 each annually cost only Rs. 7,200. Take another Rs. 800 for contingencies and other incidental cost, that works out at Rs. 8,000 per year. After the end of two years when the doctor will get himself established in his practice, Government subsidy will be withdrawn leaving the doctor to his practice alone. This will enable the doctor to earn a decent living, at the same time doing a lot of good to the agriculturist. In the second year another set of 18 dispensaries will be started, and in the third year another set of 18 dispensaries will be set up. But in the beginning of the third year the set of 18 dispensaries started in the first year will be self-supporting and the Government subsidy will be withdrawn. So practically Government will have to bear the cost of 36 dispensaries requiring about Rs. 16,000 only. If this process is carried on for ten years, then we shall have 180 dispensaries in the rural area of Bengal. And at the end Government will not be required to pay anything towards the maintenance of these dispensaries. If this process is further repeated, we can have as many dispensaries as we require at a nominal cost. The expenditure also will not be a permanent liability to the Government.

Sir, I understand that about 20 such rural dispensaries were started in 1940, and they have been functioning very satisfactorily and doing yeoman's service to the suffering agriculturists. It is a matter of gratification to note that the Sharishahat dispensary of this type is doing very satisfactory work and can favourably compare with any Government veterinary dispensary.

Sir, I fail to see why such a beneficent scheme is not put into operation wholeheartedly. I demand that the Government should take up courage in both hands and push forward the scheme which is calculated to do real good to the country.

Sir, so far as this scheme is concerned, I am sure the Minister in charge of the department knows it full well. So far, the department was in charge of a gentleman who is not expected to know all the details of the working of the Veterinary Department. But so far as the present Minister is concerned, I am sure that the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan, who professes many things for the well-being of the agriculturists, will not forget the assurances he gave to the agriculturists, and I hope that he will not be found wanting in the discharge of the duties that have been entrusted to him.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, যখনই আমরা দেশের কাজ ক'রতে যাই তখনই কৃষকদের দরদে সকলের প্রাণ ফেটে যায়। কিন্তু আজ ২ বৎসর এসেমব্লিতে দেখা গেছে যে সেই যে ৮ লক্ষ টাকা Veterinaryর, এখনও সেই ৮ লক্ষ টাকা রয়ে গেছে, এক পয়সাও বাড়ে

নি। ১৯৪০ সনে গভর্ণমেণ্ট একটা scheme করলেন, সেই schemeএর ফলে হয়েছে এই যে কোন কোন সবডিভিসনে একটী কোরে Veterinary Surgeon ডাক্তারখানা নিয়ে আছে আর ২ জন itinerary surgeon যাঁদের ভবঘুরে বলা যেতে পারে—তাঁরা বসে আছেন কবে epidemic হবে সেই জন্য। আর একটা জিনিস হ'ল তাঁরা নাকি গোতত্ত্ব সম্বন্ধে কৃষকদের সমঝিয়ে দেবেন যে কি ক'রতে হবে। কিন্তু আজ এই ৩।৪ বৎসরের মধ্যে আমরা শুনতে পাইনি কোন খানে তাঁরা গোতত্ত্ব সম্বন্ধে বক্তৃতা দিতে গেছেন। এ সম্বন্ধে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে বলতে চাই যে এই যে দুজন itinerary Veterinary Surgeon বসে আছেন তাঁদের বসিয়ে না রেখে যদি তাঁদের জন্য ২টা ডিস্পেন্সারি খুলে দেন তাহলে কৃষকের অনেক উপকার হবে, অথচ এক একটা ডিস্পেন্সারীতে ২।৩ শ টাকার বেশী লাগে না। এই একটা জিনিস আমার বলবার ছিল গভর্ণমেণ্টের কাছে।

দ্বিতীয় কথা, একটা স্কীম্ গভর্ণমেণ্ট করেছিলেন যেটা Dresser Scheme নামে অভিহিত। কিন্তু সেটা সম্পূর্ণভাবে বিফল হয়েছে। Dresser Schemeএর ভিতর লক্ষ্য করবার জিনিস ছিল যে ২ মাস, ৩ মাস, ৪ মাস ভেটেরিনারী স্কুলে রেখে শিখিয়ে এনে গ্রামে গ্রামে ওদের দেবেন, কিন্তু ২ মাস, ৩মাস, ৪ মাস ত নানাপ্রকার জন্তু জানোয়ারের বিবরণ জানতেই যায়। কাজেই সেইটুকু সময়ে কিছুই হয় না। সেই schemeটা failure হয়েছে। তা না কোরে গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি রীতিমত training দিয়ে ভেটেরিনারী স্কুল থেকে পাশ কোরিয়ে সেই ব্যবস্থা করেন তবে কৃষকদের যথেষ্ট উপকার হয়। গোমড়কে কৃষকদের যে ভাবে ক্ষতি হচ্চে গভর্ণমেণ্টের সেদিকে দেখা উচিত, গতানুগতিক ভাবে বললে হবে না। ঐ কমিটির সম্বন্ধে বলবার অনেক আছে। যখন অফিসারদের promotion দেওয়া হয় তখন কোন রকম qualification দেখা হয় না। অনেক junior, seniorদের supersede ক'রে গেছেন, এবং সেজন্য seniorদের মধ্যে ভয়ানক অসন্তোষ হয়েছে। সেই জন্য Veterinary Advisory Boardএর হাত থেকে এবং Veterinary Directorএর হাত থেকে এই selectionএর ভার উঠিয়ে নিয়ে যোগ্যতর কোন ডাক্তারের হাতে দেওয়া যায় তাহলে সুফল ফলতে পারে এবং এই ডিপার্টমেন্টে কোন রকম অসন্তুষ্টি থাকবে না।

আজ এই দুটী ব্যাপার গভর্ণমেণ্টের কাছে পেশ করতে চাই, আশা করি মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় এবিষয়ে ব্যবস্থা করবেন।

Babu NACENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my intention is to draw the attention of the Government of Bengal to the miserable plight into which the people of Midnapore and 24-Parganas have been thrown after the terrific cyclone and tidal waves of unparalleled magnitude in October last. It will be said that Government have up to this time spent more than Rs. 83 lakhs for the rehabilitation of those tracts. Unfortunately, these tracts do not grow any cotton, any coal, any jute, or any tea and therefore the European community have no soft corner in their hearts for these people. Moreover, Midnapore is regarded by some as the territory of the rebels and the people thereof as rebellious.

According to Government casualty in human lives was in the neighbourhood of 15,000 and 95 per cent. of cattle, *i.e.*, more than a lakh and 20 thousand cattle, were destroyed by these catastrophes. Now, Sir, sums which have been spent by Government have not been spent for the purchase

of cattle. It was said openly about the plight of Midnapore that after the lapse of a few years cow's milk will be a proverbial word and no one will see a cow alive. So, I submit for the consideration of the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture that he would take the people into his confidence and publicly announce what has been done to rehabilitate the subdivisions of Contai and Tamluk of the Midnapore district and the subdivision of Diamond Harbour in the 24-Parganas district so far as the supply of cattle for ploughing and cows for milk for the sustenance of children are concerned. I appeal to him to rise equal to the occasion and not to forget the miserable people of Diamond Harbour and of Contai and Tamluk.

Sir, I have greater apprehension because the administrators of the two subdivisions of Midnapore, especially the District Magistrate of Midnapore, cannot be called sympathetic. They are more than unsympathetic; I would style them as misanthropic as to their attitude towards the people. It was publicly complained and it was proclaimed on the floor of the House that at least some responsible administrator of Midnapore had requested Government to withhold Government and other charitable relief to the people of Midnapore for at least one month after the cyclone. Sir, that is a terrible state of things, and it is unfortunate that the administration of this part of the country is still in their hands and nothing is being done although Midnapore is an *aman*-producing district. I would appeal once more to the Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture to see that the people are not ruined in this part of the country.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard the speeches of the honourable members with rapt attention and have also followed the scheme suggested by Khan Sahib Maulvi Mafizuddin Ahmed for reorganisation of the veterinary dispensaries in the province. Now, Sir, under the existing system of provincialisation schemes, it is the district boards who are entrusted with the charge of starting and maintaining dispensaries as well as Veterinary Assistant Surgeons for treatment of cattle diseases within the subdivision on condition that Government will pay one-third of the total cost to the district board for each subdivisional dispensary. I am extremely sorry to state here that most of the district boards did not respond to the request of Government to start dispensaries within their jurisdiction on the ground of financial difficulty. Now, Sir, the task is entirely upon the local bodies, mainly the district board, and if the district board fails to discharge its duties—its duties to the cultivators, its duties to the agriculturists—Government cannot help in the matter. Government have already promised to contribute one-third and they are still prepared to contribute that share and in special cases Government can augment that amount if necessary.

As for training up a large number of persons with a six months' course for giving them veterinary training so that they can run dispensaries in rural areas—in union boards or in thana areas—of course that is a matter which will receive my consideration, and I shall examine the pros and cons of the proposal and also the financial aspect of the matter, and if I find it favourable, then I shall see that this proposal be given effect to.

Of course, I cannot make any promise now without entering into the financial aspect. I must admit that with the limited funds at the disposal of the Veterinary Department it is impossible for anybody—not to speak of a Minister—to make any further improvement of the department. Whatever money we have got we desire to spend for establishment cost as well as propaganda officers. These officers move from district to district and from village to village; they deliver lectures among the people, give them easy course of training in the matter of treatment of their diseased cattle. The propaganda department has drawn the attention of the public at large as will be seen from the fact that the officers are wanted simultaneously by different districts.

As regards the suggestion of my honourable friend Mr. Charu Chandra Roy that promotions of subordinate officers are not fairly or justly considered, I do not know what happened in the past, but for the future I can assure him that without going into the merits of each case no promotion will be made on any other consideration.

As regards my honourable friend Mr. Nagendra Nath Sen's point regarding cyclone-affected areas in Midnapore, the Hon'ble Revenue Minister has made statements in this House more than once stating in detail as to what has been done to remove the distress among the cultivators and agriculturists of Midnapore, specially Contai and Tamluk subdivisions, and arrangements have been made to send a large number of cows for the supply of milk and also bullocks for the purpose of cultivation. Of course, the Revenue Department is dealing with the matter, and I think the Veterinary Department cannot do anything in the matter except in the matter of cattle epidemic. If an epidemic breaks out, then this department will see that every effort and every action is taken to suppress the epidemic and remove it. However, if I get an opportunity I shall go to the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and see that if there is anything that is possible to do or required from this department, this department will not fail to do that.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

The motion of Khan Sahib Mafizuddin Ahmed that the demand of Rs. 7,80,000 for expenditure under the head "41—Veterinary" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan that a sum of Rs. 7,80,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "41—Veterinary" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-31 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Monday. the 22nd March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 22nd March, 1943, at 3-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 8 Hon'ble Ministers and 187 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Publication of price of rice in Calcutta Gazette.

***172. Mr. BANKU BEHARI MANDAL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware of the fact that the price of common rice as published in the *Calcutta Gazette* is generally much below the actual market price?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action he proposes to take for the publication in the *Gazette* of the actual rate of rice prevailing in the market?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) No. In the weekly weather and crop reports the prices of rice of the cheapest quality at headquarters and at each subdivisional station on the day of report are given. The prices now vary within very wide range from day to day and sometimes during the day and differences between the prices of the cheapest rices and those of the quality rices are also considerable. Hence the apparent anomaly, if any.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Government contemplate to take in order to stabilise the prices of essential foodstuffs like rice?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, here the Hon'ble Minister says that there is variation of prices from day to day and sometimes even on the same day. So I would like to know what steps the Government propose to take immediately so that the prices may be stabilised.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is only a part of a bigger question. I do not think he can give a simple answer in one sentence. It requires elaboration.

Mr. Hashem Ali, are you prepared to answer the question?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, it does not appertain to my department. I am concerned with growing and not with selling.

Appointments in the Bengal Medical Service.

***173. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing for the last 3 years—

(*a*) the number of vacancies that occurred in the Bengal Medical Service—

(*i*) upper grade, and
(*ii*) lower grade;

(*b*) the number of vacancies that have been filled up during the period;

(*c*) the names and qualifications of the appointed candidates;

(*d*) the date of their appointments;

(*e*) whether the appointments are against permanent vacancies; and

(*f*) the terms and conditions of the appointments?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) (*i*) 60 (12 permanent and 48 temporary).

(*ii*) 155 (58 permanent and 97 temporary).

(*b*) Bengal Medical Service (upper) 38 (all temporarily).

Bengal Medical Service (lower) 146 (18 permanently and 128 temporarily).

(*c*) and (*d*) Two statements are laid on the Library Table.

(*e*) Some of these appointments are against permanent vacancies.

(*f*) Permanent Assistant Surgeons and Sub-Assistant Surgeons are required to execute bonds—copies of which are laid on the Library Table.

Appointments have been made on the following scales of pay:—

(1) Bengal Medical Service (upper) Rs.140 per mensem (fixed).

(2) Bengal Medical Service (lower)—

Permanent—Rs.60—75—75—80—10/2—140—5/2—155 per mensem.

Temporary—Rs.60 per mensem (fixed).

All these officers are subject to the usual disciplinary rules.

Alleged hardship to people due to non-availability of Judicial stamps at Raiganj, Dinajpur.

***174. Babu SYAMAPROSAD BARMAN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department aware—

(*i*) that there is no sub-treasury at Raiganj, in the district of Dinajpur;

(*ii*) that judicial stamps for plaints, specially of higher denominations, are not always available at Raiganj;

(*iii*) that judicial stamps can be had from the Dinajpur Treasury only once in a week;

(*iv*) that in all cases (except in suits filed on the Tamadi day, i.e., on the 15th April), where plaints are filed with insufficient court-fees, only one day's time is allowed by the court, for putting in the deficit court-fees; and

(*v*) that this has caused hardship upon the public?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking any steps in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) No. Judicial stamps are issued from the Dinajpur Treasury twice a week, viz., on Tuesday and on Friday.

(*iv*) With a view to discourage the tendency to file plaints with insufficient court-fees, when no application for time to file deficit court-fees is made, one day's time is allowed. In deserving cases whenever petitions for time are filed, sufficient time is granted.

(*v*) No such instance has been reported.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Drainage scheme for the Kaliaghai in Midnapore district.

***175. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a serious flood in the river Kaliaghai in the district of Midnapore threatened the Amarshi Embankment and breached the Taladia Bund and the bunds on both sides of the Kapaleswari river in the last rainy season?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the steps taken by the Government to minimise the pressure of the flood in the Kaliaghai river?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state whether any effect has been given to the pending Drainage Scheme for widening the bed of the Kaliaghai?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government are considering the desirability of taking up the scheme this year before the rains?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) to (*d*) It has been decided to widen the bed of the Kaliaghai in order to minimise the pressure of flood in the river. The work will be taken up this year as a test relief work.

Grant of allowance to one Sj. Rabindra Bhowmick.

***176. Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Political) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that one Sj. Rabindra Bhowmick of Raiganj in Dinajpur was twice tried under the Defence of India Rules and subsequently acquitted;

(*ii*) that he was home-interned after such acquittal, with certain restrictions;

(*iii*) that he subsequently lost his job in the postal department;

(*iv*) that he was deprived of the opportunity to earn his livelihood so as to maintain himself and his dependants; and

(*v*) that he was drawing about Rs.40 per month as pay from the postal department?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he applied for any allowance?

(*c*) If so, has any allowance been granted to him?

(*d*) If no allowance has been granted to him, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reasons thereof;

(*ii*) whether Government propose to grant him an allowance soon; and

(*iii*) the amount that is proposed to be given?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the order for his home-internment and the order of restrictions were passed?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*)(*i*) No.

(*ii*) He was not home-interned but was directed to reside and remain within the jurisdiction of Raiganj police-station in Dinajpur district with certain restrictions.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*iv*) No obstacle was placed in the way of his earning a livelihood within the area to which he was restricted.

(*v*) He was a temporary postal clerk on Rs.45 per mensem.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) and (*d*) His petition is under consideration.

(*e*) Government order No. 9892P., dated the 2nd July, 1942, was served on the 5th July, 1942.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state what are the restrictions in question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Ordinarily these restrictions are reporting to the police-station about movements, but in this particular case I cannot say from memory if there was any. If this question is pressed, I must ask for notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iv*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that when a man is restrained, he finds it almost impossible to get a job, either Governmental or non-Governmental?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is an argumentative question.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether he lost his job because he was restrained?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state when he applied for the allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got the papers; as far as I remember, a little more than a month and a half ago.

Air raids on Calcutta area.

***177. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Civil Defence) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the dates on which Calcutta was raided by Japanese planes in the month of December, 1942; and

(*ii*) whether he was present on any of those dates in Calcutta?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the dates he was present?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) 20th December, 1942; 22nd December, 1942; 23rd December, 1942; 24th December, 1942; 28th December, 1942.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) 20th December, 1942; 22nd December, 1942; 23rd December, 1942.

Muslim students of the Calcutta Technical School and their observance of Iduz-zoha festival.

***178. Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of Muslim students in the Calcutta Technical School, at 110, Surendra Nath Banerjee Road, Calcutta; and

(*ii*) whether the Muslim students were allowed to observe Iduz-zoha Festival in December last?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the salary or remuneration of the Muslim students for not presenting themselves at the school on the Iduz-zoha day was deducted?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENTS [the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca)]: (*a*)(*i*) 15.

(*ii*) Yes, the school remained closed on that day.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) Does not arise. The actual position, however, is that the students or the workshop authorities, by whom they are deputed, pay tuition fees to the school. There is no provision for the payment of any salary or remuneration to the students by the school.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any training centre attached to the Calcutta Training School?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: On a point of privilege, Sir. May I submit that the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur to whose department this question relates went to Dacca in order to canvass for the Upper House election, but still he does not find time to come to this House——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is not a question of privilege.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the thing is this: We are not getting justice in the hands of the Hon'ble Minister who does not know how this department works.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The question of Mr. Mafizuddin Ahmed, namely, "whether there is any training centre attached to the Calcutta Training School" may of course arise out of the original question, but there is nothing wrong in the Hon'ble Minister's asking notice for it.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, if the Nawab Bahadur had been present here, he might have been in a better position to answer the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not necessarily.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: By his remaining absent we are not getting justice.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot compel a Minister to be present here.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, he is deliberately flouting the House. He could go to Dacca to canvass for——

Mr. SPEAKER: He is a Minister and not a Speaker. (Laughter.)

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Sir, this is apparently an evasive answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: It does not arise; may be evasive.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Construction of Dangapara bridge over Sonaidanga khal.

54. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a sum of Rs.6,000 has been sanctioned for the erection of Dangapara bridge over Sonaidanga *khal* within Nator subdivision?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons of not erecting such bridge up till now?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes—in 1941-42.

(*b*) Due to abnormal rise in prices of iron, the contractors could not secure iron joists, etc., required for the bridge at the sanctioned estimate. The scheme has, therefore, been postponed till the return of normal times.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if by "normal times" he means after the end of the war?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, after the end of the war.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he gave a definite assurance in a mass meeting that the work would be completed soon?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a vague question, Mr. Masud. You must put a more definite question.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that in May, 1940, he presided over a mass meeting in Nator, and that he gave a definite assurance in the course of his speech there that the work would be completed as soon as possible?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I could not quite follow the question. I gave an assurance in 1940 and the budget allotment was made in 1941-42. Then came the Japanese war and everything was upset and the work could not be taken up.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: May I know, Sir, why this question has been answered by the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq? This question relates to the Public Works Department.

Mr. SPEAKER: But, Mr. Sen, the question has been addressed to the Minister in charge of the Home Department and the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq, who is the Home Minister, has therefore answered it.

Appointment of Assistant Analysts in the Bengal Public Health Laboratory.

55. Dr. A. M. MALIK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of permanent Assistant Analysts in the Bengal Public Health Laboratory; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are held by (1) Muslims and (2) Hindus?

(*b*) Is it a fact that one of the posts is vacant since July last?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of appointing a Muslim to the post?

(*d*) If the reply to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) Thirteen, of whom 10 are Hindus and 3 Muslims.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) and (*d*). Do not arise.

A.R.P. Medical Scheme.

56. Mr. J. C. GUPTA: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government (Defence) Department aware that the Bengal Provincial Branch of the Indian Medical Association appointed an Expert Committee—the Emergency Medical Service Standing Committee —to formulate a skeleton scheme on the medical aspects of Civil Defence for the Province of Bengal?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has received such a scheme in March, 1942, and subsequently a memorandum on the subject in August, 1942, from the Indian Medical Association?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware—

(*i*) that the British Government have arranged one bed per every 200 persons of the population in the various A.R.P. Hospitals in the United Kingdom;

(*ii*) that only one bed has been provided for every 2,000 persons of the population in the A.R.P. hospitals of Bengal; and

(*iii*) that the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bengal invited the Emergency Medical Service Standing Committee of the Indian Medical Association at a conference at the Surgeon-General's Office in April, 1942?

(*d*) If the answers to clauses (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table a summary of the A.R.P. medical scheme formulated by the Government and the Indian Medical Association and a copy of the memorandum submitted by the Medical Association?

(*e*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of devising ways and means for improvement of the present A.R.P. medical arrangements in consultation with the elected representatives of Bengal Provincial Branch of the Indian Medical Association?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) (*i*) Ratio of 1 bed per 200 persons only obtains in the London area; elsewhere in the United Kingdom the ratio is much smaller.

(*ii*) In Bengal, the ratio is 1 bed to 566 persons in Calcutta and the Industrial Area, and in other parts of Bengal it is 1 to 705 among the population living in the areas considered to be vulnerable.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*d*) Copies are laid on the Library Table.

(*e*) Government have already had the benefit of several consultations with the elected representatives of the Indian Medical Association, Bengal, and consider that the provision made is sufficient.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 171A.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of order, Sir. We have got a printed list of held-over questions beginning from No. 63. I should like to know why instead of No. 63 being called, question No. 171A is now being taken up?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sen, this question of 18th March is a short-notice question.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Sale of standard cloth.

***171A** (SHORT NOTICE). **Maulvi HAFIZUDDIN CHAUDHURI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the approximate date when the standard cloths will be available in the market; and

(*ii*) whether agents for the sale of such cloths have already been appointed?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when they are likely to be selected; and

(*ii*) whether Communal Ratio Rules will be observed in selecting such agents?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Within a week or so.

(*a*) (*ii*) and (*b*) Yes. The Distributing Trades Tribunal has provisionally selected some agents to handle the bales as these are received. For sale in Calcutta the Controller of Civil Supply has provisionally selected some shops in the *bustee* areas. For the 13 selected districts the District Magistrates have selected shopkeepers or are selecting shopkeepers which will be finished in the course of a few days.

Government of India are however setting up a Provincial Advisory Committee in which Traders and Consumers will be represented among others and which will make final selections. The policy is to select from among the existing traders as far as possible and though a strict communal ratio cannot be insisted upon, the interest of all communities will be carefully considered.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of the 13 districts referred to in answer (*a*) (*ii*) and (*b*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of order, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister in his answer has made mention of 13 districts, and he now says that he wants notice. It seems he is trying to evade answering the question. Sir, I appeal to you to see that we are not treated in such a shilly-shallying manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: What can I do, Mr. Sen? I am helpless if he cannot answer your question.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: He ought to have come fully prepared to answer this question.

Dearness allowance for the Factory workers.

***63. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken to grant adequate dearness allowance to the labourers and employees of workshops, mills and factories that come under the Factory Act?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of dearness allowance sanctioned in each case?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any arrangements have been made for providing all the employees and labourers with facilities for buying essential commodities at fair prices?

(*d*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the price of commodities now is more than double of what they were before the war?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Whenever a complaint about inadequacy of dearness allowance granted by any employer comes to the notice of the Labour Commissioner or of Government, the matter is enquired into and steps are taken for grant of adequate dearness allowance by resort to adjudication under rule 81A of the Defence of India Rules or the Bengal Essential Services (Maintenance) Rules, where necessary. In a very large number of cases, however, the Labour Commissioner has found it possible to have dearness allowances granted by methods of conciliation and mediation without recourse to Defence of India Rules or the Bengal Essential Services (Maintenance) Rules.

(*b*) Dearness allowances granted by employers vary not only from industry to industry but also from place to place. Detailed information about allowances paid in all factories is not available and will take time to complete. A list of such allowances in important factories is laid on the Table.

(*c*) All employers have been advised to open cheap food shops and in fact arrangements exist in almost all important factories for providing employees and labourers with facilities for buying essential commodities at fair prices.

(*d*) The prices of a number of commodities are more than double of what they were before the war.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (b) of starred question No. 63.

		Rs.	a.	p.	
1.	Oriental Gas	6	0	0	Up to Rs. 149.
2.	Burmah Shell	12	8	0	,, Rs. 100
		15	0	0	,, Rs. 200.
		20	0	0	,, Rs. 300.
3.	Calcutta Tramways	7	0	0	,, Rs. 200.
4.	Electric Supply	7	0	0	,, Rs. 50.
		8	0	0	,, Rs. 250.
5.	Port Commissioners	8	0	0	,, Rs. 145.
6.	Bengal Government	8	0	0	,, Rs. 34.
		14	0	0	,, Rs. 150.
7.	Government of India (proposed from 1st February, 1943).	10	0	0	,, Rs. 120.
8.	E. I. Rly. (Calcutta area)	10	8	0	,, Rs. 120.
9.	Bengal Telephone	7	0	0	,, Rs. 39.
		10	0	0	,, Rs. 120.
10.	Jute Mills	1	4	0	per week.
11.	James Alexander & Co., Ltd	8	0	0	per month up to as.12-9 per day.
		9	0	0	per month from as.12-9 to Rs. 1-8-3 per day.
		10	0	0	per month above Rs. 1-8-3 per day.
12.	Braithwaite & Co. (India), Ltd. ..	6	8	0	per month on Rs. 15 per month.
		10	0	0	per month on Rs. 100 per month.
13.	Bridge and Roof Co. (India), Ltd. ..	Grain allowance of 4 pies per hour. Dearness allowance 12½ per cent. on first 30 and 6¼ per cent. on balance over.			
14.	Britannia Engineering Co.	Three pies per hour flat rate.			
15.	Burn & Co., Ltd.	Rs.10 flat to all workers.			
16.	Hooghly Docking and Engineering Co., Ltd.	Rs.7 flat to all workers.			
17.	Jessop & Co., Ltd.	Rs.6-8-0 on Rs. 15 per month and Rs.9-8 on Rs.100.			
18.	Mackintosh Burn, Ltd.	Rs.9 flat rate.			
19.	A. & J. Main & Co., Ltd.	Coolies on Rs.15 to Rs.20, Rs.5 per month, others from Rs.4 on Rs.15 per month to Rs.6 on Rs.100 per month.			
20.	Metal Box Co. of India, Ltd. .. .	D. A. varying from as.4-4 to as.6-8 per day.			
21.	Saxby and Farmer (India), Ltd. ..	As.3 per day plus as.1-3 per rupee.			
22.	J. Stone and Co. (India), Ltd. ..	7 pies per hour.			
23.	T. E. Thompson & Co., Ltd.	7 pies per hour.			

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons why the dearness allowance paid to employees varies between firms and firms and what is the method adopted by Government for mediation and conciliation?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: This dearness allowance, in fact, is given by the employers to the employees and it varies according to the rates of pay of different workers in different factories. It has also some connection with the prices of commodities at different places. Government always try their utmost to see to the interests of the labourers.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether cotton textile mills and the iron foundries are included in the answer he has given?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That I cannot say without fresh notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have prescribed any scale according to which Government request the employing firms to grant dearness allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: No; Government have not.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why is it that factories outside Calcutta have not been mentioned in the statement referred to in answer (*b*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The information required would require more time; but if the honourable member wants further particulars I will ask for notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if by reading the question he understood that only Calcutta was meant?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The answer I have given is quite explicit that details of other factories could not be had at short notice.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the dearness allowance is adequate in relation to the cost of living index?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Certainly, it is.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the present cost of living index?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It varies from time to time.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I want to know, Sir, what is the present cost of living index?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I want notice.

Prosecutions for profiteering in kerosene oil in Brahmanbaria subdivision.

***72. Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of prosecutions in the subdivision of Brahmanbaria for profiteering in kerosene oil since kerosene oil has been controlled;

(*ii*) the names of persons prosecuted with their addresses; and

(*iii*) whether any agent or sub-agent has been prosecuted?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*i*) Thirty-four.

(*ii*) A statement is laid on the Library Table.

(*iii*) In one case, the son of a sub-agent and in two cases, employees of sub-agents were prosecuted.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what have been the results of these prosecutions?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I do not know; possibly, they are still pending.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of cases out of these 34 cases of prosecution which have ended in conviction of the accused?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That information is not in my possession.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (*iii*), am I to understand that all the three cases are still pending?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Possibly so; I do not know the result as yet.

Opening of more centres for Sub-Overseer Examination.

***85. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Industries Department be pleased to state whether he has received any petitions from Rajshahi, Burdwan and Pabna Industrial Schools for opening Sub-Overseer Examination centre in their respective schools?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) In pursuance of the recommendation of the Overseer Examination Board, steps have already been taken for opening centres for the Sub-Overseer Examination at Pabna, Rajshahi and Burdwan as a temporary measure.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether centres have actually been opened this year in Pabna, Rajshahi and Burdwan for the Sub-Overseer Examination?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: With your kind permission, Sir, I hope the printed answer I have given may be treated as withdrawn in view of the intimation that had already been sent to your office.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Again, Sir, I draw your attention to the unfair manner in which the Opposition is being treated by Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that the department concerned informed the Assembly Secretary that they wanted to modify this answer because of the fact that certain facts transpired which made this answer not quite accurate. So, I think, this question ought not to have been called out. It was a mistake on the part of the Secretary.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In that case, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister should not have read out the answer.

War supply by Industries Department of Bengal Government.

***88. Khan Sahib JASIMUDDIIN AHMAD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the duties of the present Director of Industries;

(*ii*) whether the Department is at present engaged in supplying war requisites; and

(*iii*) what are the supplies and for which of them the Department has undertaken monopoly?

(*b*) Do these require any technical skill that the Director or his experts have had to advise one?

(*c*) Is the Department organising labour or workshop in this respect?

(*d*) Has the Director or any of his technical officers ever been trained in the preparation of camouflage nets? If so, where?

(*e*) Is it in the contemplation of Government to place the services of the Director under the disposal of the Central Government in the Supply Department of War Supplies?

(*f*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of a feeling existing in the minds of the Muslim community for the inequitable distribution of the work of camouflage nets?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(1) the names,

(2) addresses and location of workshops;

(3) quantity of twine or thread supplied, and

(4) amount of money deducted as rejections,

against each contractor engaged in camouflage net preparation during the calendar year 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): The scheme launched by the Central Government for the systematic use of small-scale industry in the production of war supplies envisaged that the Provincial Government should act as contractor of the Supply Department and should *inter alia* through the Provincial Industries Department organise and guide the individual producers. The question of the Provincial Government acting as contractor of the Supply Department was carefully considered by this Government and in view of the considerations (1) that, as the goods are to be produced for the Central Government, the Provincial Control should be kept at a minimum, (2) that it was desirable to encourage independence among small producers, and (3) that this Government have neither the staff nor the experience to undertake contractual functions, it was decided with the concurrence of the Central Government that the Director of Industries, Bengal, should act as the agent of the Central Government in the matter of procurement of war supplies. As the Director has been functioning as the agent of the Central Government in the matter of war supplies and as he is responsible solely to that Government in this respect, I do not feel competent to answer the question which relates to a matter of administration for which I am not responsible.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In the answer given it appears that several reasons were given as to why the Director of Industries, Bengal, should act as the agent of the Central Government. One reason is that the Provincial Control should be kept at a minimum. Do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that the Director of Industries acted as the agent of the Central Government not in his official capacity as a servant of the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: In the capacity of a lent officer, so to say.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the Department of Industries has come practically to a standstill as a result of the scheme now adopted by Government, that is to say, lending the services of the Director of Industries to the Central Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The answer is in the negative. The Director of Industries is carrying on with his normal duties for which he is responsible to the Provincial Government.

Distribution of foodstuffs and fuel through selling agencies.

***89. Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether the Government have taken steps to promote distribution of

foodstuffs and fuel, such as coal, through selling agencies of consumers organised on co-operative principles?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure selection of such agencies in preference to other agencies?

(*c*) If not, why not?

(*d*) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the rules, if any have been framed, for the selection of dealers, big and small, in foodstuff and fuel?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) Government policy is to distribute supplies through established channels of trade. This does not debar selection of dependable Consumers' Societies.

(*d*) No such rules have been framed but the general principle followed in selecting dealers has been to select dependable dealers already established in the trade. The question what principles should be followed in selecting dealers is being examined by the Distributing Trades Tribunal.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that these distributing or so-called dependable suppliers are oppressing the people very greatly by raising the prices of the commodities at their sweet will?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: "Dependable dealers" who have been mentioned in the answer are the normal dealers already in trade.

Supply of coal and engine oil to industries.

***90. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken to ensure a steady supply of—

(*a*) coal to the industries at a fair and reasonable price; and

(*b*) diesel oil and furnace oil to those industries which depend on oil engines to run their factories and also to mufassal electric supply companies?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes. From the provincial quota of coal wagons 479 wagons were allotted to rice mills and 52 wagons to small industries in January last; 427 wagons to rice mills and 52 wagons to others have so far been allotted in February. Such industries as consume less than one wagon (25 tons) per month are advised to get their supply from the retail dealers.

(*b*) The Controller of Supplies, Bengal Circle, under Government of India deals with all questions of supply of diesel oil and furnace oil to

industries in consultation with Fuel Oil Advisory Committee. The Electrical Commissioner with the approval of Government of India has fixed a provincial quota of diesel oil for all electrical undertakings of this Province in consultation with this Government. Allocations have been made to different electrical undertakings from this provincial quota and each District Officer has been advised to regulate hours of supply in order to enable every undertaking to keep within its allotment. The Controller of Supplies, Bengal Circle, arranges for supply of diesel oil to electrical undertakings according to quota and allotments fixed.

Price control in Rangpur district.

***91. Mr. KSHETRA NATH SINGHA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether price control is exercised in the district of Rangpur; and

(*ii*) if so, in how many shops kerosene, sugar and soda are sold under licence?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that—

(*i*) in some shops when higher prices are offered sugar is available; and

(*ii*) partiality in the distribution of kerosene oil is made.

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, are the Government considering the desirability of taking measures for equal distribution of these essential articles?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*)(*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Kerosene oil is being sold from more than 400 centres.

Sugar is being sold from almost all the shops.

Soda being hardly available, it is being sold at selected centres.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Alleged curtailment of certain facilities to workers of the Calcutta Tramways Company, Limited.

23. Mr. ASHUTOSH MALLICK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Agent of the Calcutta Tramways Company gave the employees any assurance of—

(*i*) granting them an advance of salary;

(*ii*) granting free quarters for them;

(*iii*) appointing a Committee to select their quarters near the depots; and

(*iv*) authorising an officer of the Company to rent houses for the purpose?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Agent has withdrawn the assurance subsequently?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state whether he is aware of a feeling existing amongst the employees of the Company?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) and (*d*) Do not arise.

Alleged complaint against Directorate of Civil Supplies by Jessore people.

24. Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether any representation has been received by him from the people of Jessore against the administration of the office of the Directorate of Civil Supplies?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay a copy of the same on the Table?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the actual time when this answer was furnished to him that no complaint by the Jessore people reached his office? With reference to question (*a*), he says "No". What is the actual date to which this "No" refers?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: 8th February, 1943, is the date.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Have Government any information after that date?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Cancellation of tender from a firm after acceptance by Government.

25. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Government after accepting a tender from a certain firm for supply of rice subsequently cancelled the same?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*c*) What was the principle followed by Government in the acceptance of tenders?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the lowest tender was accepted in all cases?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*f*) What was the total loss to Government revenue by the non-acceptance of the lowest tender in each case?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the names of contractors selected, with their addresses;

(*ii*) the amount of contract allotted to each contractor; and

(*iii*) the places where rice and paddy have been stored, together with the amount stored at each place?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Evidently the honourable member refers to the arrangements made for the purchase and removal of rice and paddy under the Denial Scheme. Having regard to the nature of the scheme it was not possible to invite tenders formally. Arrangements were made after informal consultation with certain reputable firms. There is therefore no question of acceptance or cancellation of any tenders. Originally only one firm was entrusted with the contract, but subsequently, with a view to speeding up the work, several other contractors were selected and definite areas of operation allotted to each.

(*b*) to (*f*) Do not arise, *vide* reply to (*a*).

(*g*) (*i*) Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar, 51, Ezra Street, Calcutta.

Messrs. B. K. Poddar & Co., 16, Chaulpatty Road, Beliaghatta.

Mr. Ashutosh Bhattacharyya, 69/2, Chetla Road, Alipore.

Mr. Ahmed Khan, 22, Zakaria Street, Calcutta.

Mr. H. Datta, 15, Clive Street, Calcutta.

(*ii*) No specific amounts were allotted to each contractor but the areas in which they were to operate were defined as follows:—

Midnapore district; Bhola and Pirojpore subdivisions of Bakarganj district; Satkhira subdivision of Khulna district; Sadar and Patuakhali subdivisions of Bakarganj district; and Sadar and Bagerhat subdivisions of Khulna district respectively.

(*iii*) A statement is laid on the Library Table. The rice and paddy stored at these up-country centres have since been mostly disposed of.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the subsequent arrangement made by Government, that is to say, allotting the work to more contractors proved successful and whether all the contractors could execute the work entrusted to them?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Whether the contractors executed their work successfully or not is a matter of opinion.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I wanted to know whether the works entrusted to different contractors were executed by them?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes, they were executed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: All of them in full?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Four contractors were appointed subsequently and they did their work.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the statement that arrangements were made after informal consultation with certain reputable firms, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of those firms which were consulted?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that no firm was consulted formally?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Government answer is that some reputable firms were consulted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That was done informally. What were the terms which were communicated to such firms before their acceptance or otherwise was sought?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That may be answered if a detailed question is put.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This question is a detailed question.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has given the answer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, there is a question of privilege again and I have to seek your intervention. On a previous occasion we had submitted to you that if the Hon'ble Minister comes prepared to answer a question, he must get thoroughly ready and prepared. He cannot evade a question by only seeking protection to that rule that he may reply in a form that he thinks necessary.

Sir, I seek your intervention. In case I may not be able to use any strong language, I seek your assistance. If the Hon'ble Minister always says " 'give me notice', 'I want further notice', or 'I cannot give details'," then it is better that he does not take up this question at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I have understood your point. You desire that the Hon'ble Minister should be thoroughly prepared. The question of being thoroughly prepared is a matter of opinion. The Hon'ble Minister thought that he was thoroughly prepared which might not be thorough in your estimation.

What was your question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, in reply it is stated "arrangements were made after informal consultation with certain reputable firms". I say: who are those firms?

Mr. SPEAKER: That of course is a very pertinent question and in all fairness the Hon'ble Minister ought to have been able to answer it, but he has not been able to do so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That shows that he is not ready.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you cannot make him ready.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If I say that he has not come prepared, you will object. If I say "foolish" you will be angry. What shall I do? What is the parliamentary language which I can use?

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not use any language here. You may deal with it during the budget discussion on the head "General Administration" and then you can criticise the conduct of the Hon'ble Ministers. If you desire there are ample opportunities for you to bring in a resolution or a censure motion, not now but in the next session.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to the answer, namely, "having regard to the nature of the scheme it was not possible to invite tenders formally", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were the obstacles in the way of inviting formal tenders? What was the nature of the situation which prevented the calling of formal tenders?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The purchase of rice was made at the behest of the Central Government following the denial policy of rice from certain districts of Bengal. The matter was so persistent and emergent that calling of tenders and other things could not be gone into and arrangements had to be made as early as possible.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the arrangements were made with the approval or consent of the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that arrangements were made by the Government and over the head of the Ministers the Secretary issued orders?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already said that he asked for notice. The other part of the question does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer that "the rice and paddy stored at these up-country centres have since been mostly disposed of", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what quantity of this denial rice or paddy is still lying in the hands of Government agents?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that out of this denial rice a certain proportion has been exported out of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what proportion was it?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that a certain portion of the denial rice was located in the Midnapore district?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that a certain portion of the Midnapore district rice which was kept out of the denial rice was exported out of Midnapore and that other rice from other areas was imported into the Midnapore district to meet the demand of the flood-striken people?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I want notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In view of the fact that originally one firm was entrusted, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which was the fortunate firm?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The name is Mirza Ali Akbar.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if this firm of Mirza Ali Akbar had anything to do with Messrs. M. A. Ispahani & Co.?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then why is it that this *benami* Mirza Ali Akbar is there?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The firm was connected with Messrs. Ispahani and Co.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the contracting parties were Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar, of 51, Ezra Street, and the Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Messrs. Ispahani and Co. were only guarantors of Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar and had nothing to do direct with the contract?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why is it that this firm of Mirza Ali Akbar which was not considered to be of sufficient standing as to require a guarantee was given this contract?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Every agent has to give a guarantee.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any similar guarantee was taken from Mr. H. Datta?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the work was given to Mirza Ali Akbar, because that was the only firm which could undertake to do the work within such a short time?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: So far as I understand he was the first man to consent.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that at the time Mirza Ali Akbar was approached, no other firm, Indian or European, undertook to purchase rice on behalf of the Government of India or on the scale Mirza Ali Akbar did?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is exactly what he said.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the so-called firm Mirza Ali Akbar was ever approached by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I cannot give any further information on that line.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, he has already stated in reply to a question of Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali that Mirza Ali Akbar was the only firm that agreed or consented to accept the responsibility and in reply to another question he said that that was the firm that was approached by the Government. So I wanted to find out——

Mr. SPEAKER: Did he say that? I don't think so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then let us have a clear answer, Sir.

Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how did the Government come across this firm of Mirza Ali Akbar? Is there any person of that name living or dead?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I shall collect all the informations and answer it tomorrow.

(Mr. K. Nooruddin rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you going to ask any supplementary question?

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has undertaken to answer this question tomorrow. You may put your question tomorrow.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: When he will prepare his draft reply he may also inform the House whether Government approached Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar for the contract or whether Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar according to the practice of Calcutta chased after the Council of Ministers for the contract.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Nooruddin, what is your question?

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Sir, I was going to put the same question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: When the Hon'ble Minister gives his answers tomorrow, will he please find out whether this firm of Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar has the same address as that of Messrs. Ispahani & Co.?

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please also find out, when originally one firm was entrusted with the contract, what kind of business this firm did, what was the exact amount of rice and at what price they supplied to Government?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please find out for answer tomorrow what amounts of rice, etc., were collected by other firms and the credentials and status of those firms?

Short-notice Question.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Sir, I tabled a short-notice question on the 18th regarding the shortage of food in the district of Chittagong. May I know when we may expect to get the answer?

Mr. SPEAKER: It has been forwarded to Government.

Unstarred Question No. 10.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In connection with Unstarred Question No. 10, I supplied the supplementary questions for which the Hon'ble Chief Minister wanted notice and which I formally handed over to the Lady Parliamentary Secretary of the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur and she was good enough to assure me replies today. Sir, may we know if she is ready today to give the answers?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Sir, Dr. Sanyal handed over to me a list containing a number of supplementaries which he had put on the question standing in the name of Mr. Nagendra Nath Sen regarding the expenditure for maintaining the Directorate of Civil Supplies. He wanted me to let him have the answers today. As soon as I got the list I read out the questions to an officer of that department over the 'phone and I requested that officer to furnish the information on those points today or as soon as possible. Unfortunately, I understand that the information has not yet been available. Presumably it will take some time for the department to collect the particulars about the various points raised by Dr. Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I only submit that there are certain important issues involved, particularly relating to the appointment of the Personal Assistant to the Secretary to the Distributing Trades Tribunal which may be taken up during the budget discussion on the "Extraordinary Charges". I submit that the answers may be forthcoming before that date.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is for the Hon'ble Minister to take necessary steps.

Applications for leave of absence.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, I would like to draw your attention to section 68(*4*) of the Government of India Act, 1935, in connection with leave of absence for absentee members. My point is this: I think that that section does not apply to the prisoner members who are in jail at present. We have many difficulties. I can read out a letter from which I will show how——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, I think it would be better if you could see me in my Chamber. This is not a subject on the agenda today and I think you are going to raise a very important question of which you spoke to me over the 'phone. You better see me in my Chamber and I will discuss it with you.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, we want a ruling from you that these prisoner members need not have to apply for leave.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a question of interpretation of the relevant section. This matter has arisen in the Orissa Assembly also. I have got a letter from the Speaker of the Orissa Assembly. It is not a simple matter and it cannot be answered here and now. It requires serious consideration. So, please see me in my Chamber.

Adjournment motion.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I gave notice of an adjournment motion and you have been pleased to refuse consent. May I request you to reconsider this in view of the fact that——

Mr. SPEAKER: You better see me in my Chamber. As far as I could see, the adjournment motion infringes some rules. Therefore, I had to refuse consent. Please see me in my Chamber.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, may we know if you will waive the matter of urgency?

Mr. SPEAKER: You see me in my Chamber and I will discuss with you.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

37—Education—General.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,67,56,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General".

Maulvi HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of my motion is to raise a discussion on the failure to take up the Secondary Education Bill for passing.

Sir, since the inauguration of the new Constitution in 1937 the oppressed and neglected millions who form the majority population in Bengal desired many changes in the social, economic, cultural and intellectual aspects of life to march with others as their equal partners in all affairs of administration. During the course of the last régimé some of the cherished objects were to some extent fulfilled, but others are still left to be done.

Sir, the Secondary Education Bill which was first introduced in this House in 1940 was the outcome of such longfelt grievances of the majority community. But this unfortunate Bill has a chequered history behind its long career. Before it came into being a countrywide agitation was started by persons with vested interests in the Calcutta University and also by the entire Caste Hindu community against this Bill.

In the course of discussion in this House the Bill was styled as reactionary, communal and anti-national by its opponents. The Hon'ble Minister Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the leader of the then League and the Coalition Party, was in charge of the Education Department. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee on the 20th August, 1940, consisting of members from various communities and different political parties. But, Sir, then the entire Caste Hindu members together with a few Scheduled Caste members resigned from the Committee as a protest. Mr. Fazlul Huq and the party then supporting him decided to get through the Bill with the help of other Hindu co-operators, as they thought that no injustice was going to be done to any community by the passing of the Bill. The Select Committee's Report was published in April, 1941. Sir, in November, 1941, even a few clauses of this Bill were considered and passed. Finding that all protests and agitations were of no avail, the ingenious brains of the Caste Hindus in this Legislature adopted the policy of divide and rule in the rank and file of the Muslim members. Mr. Fazlul Huq, the then Chief Minister, who was not pulling on well with other members of his Muslim League colleagues in the Cabinet, was an easy prey to the Hindu game. Power-loving as he is, he made a very strategic use of the Bill by bartering it away in order to purchase the support of the diehard communals of the province and thereby to keep his position as the Chief Minister safe. He was successful in his attempt as a result of which the Progressive Coalition Ministry came in in December, 1941.

Though Mr. Fazlul Huq was the Chief Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee was his leader, who claimed to be the custodian of the Muslim interests in Bengal, and under his advice the old Bill was dropped and a new one with his own drafting was introduced last year, this time, which was also referred to a Select Committee. But this Committee was never called to meet for reasons best known to the present Ministry.

Now, we hear, Sir, that a new Bill for the third time is going to be introduced this session. But we presume, Sir, this Bill will also meet with the same fate as the former ones.

Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq has assured this House times without number that the Secondary Education Bill would be brought in and passed. But the circumstances in which Mr. Fazlul Huq finds himself now have made us believe that this Bill will never see the light of the day. (A VOICE FROM THE TREASURY BENCH: It will come this session.)

Sir, the old maxim is "failures are the pillars of success". Mr. Fazlul Huq has succeeded in securing his position as Chief Minister when he has failed in the Secondary Education Bill.

With these words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion to raise a discussion on the failure to provide adequate relief to educational institutions to meet the situation created through the present war emergency.

Sir, the war has had various kinds of repercussions on different institutions in this country. Some have profited by the war and some have grown fat and others have been faced with starvation and disaster. The first big casualty of this great war approaching this country appears to have been the educational institutions of this province. The Hon'ble Chief Minister who had, for some time as Education Minister of the province, intimate contact with the educational organisation of Bengal knows very well how the teachers and the institutions of Bengal suffered terribly through the approach of the war. During December, 1941, all on a sudden Government issued instructions that certain institutions in the danger zones must close down until adequate air-raid precautions were taken as safety measures. The University of Calcutta thereafter, in collaboration with the Government, undertook to arrange for suitable protective measures for these institutions. After some amount of correspondence the Government was induced to accept the suggestions of the University for providing certain advances for making suitable air-raid protective walls in those educational institutions close to the area of the danger zones. But, Sir, even though the University made several representations and the heads of institutions collectively and individually approached the Government with various difficulties that they were faced with hardly any suitable remedy could be devised. Sir, for a few months I had the unfortunate position of being entrusted with the difficult task of looking after the interests of these

institutions on behalf of the University of Calcutta, and I know intimately how with the greatest goodwill then existing both of the Hon'ble Chief Minister as well as the then Finance Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, and in spite of the greatest collaboration and co-operation that these educational institutions were prepared to offer nothing could be done. It was also regrettable that in some direction discriminatory arrangements were made in favour of the European and Anglo-Indian schools. This was extremely wrong. I submit, Sir, that educational institutions in other parts of the world which are similarly affected by war conditions were not treated with so much scant attention as the Government of Bengal have extended to educational institutions in danger zones here. In Britain educational institutions have not only received grants provided for them, but students were taken bodily from out of the danger zones and were provided with suitable educational facilities outside.

Mr. J. W. CHIPPENDALE: Not by Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, by Government. Mr. Chippendale who is a chip of the old block is proud of his Anglo-Indian heritage because he feels that some British blood is flowing in his veins and feels hurt when I am talking of British Government's educational expenses. But the Anglo-Indian community should realise that they have to get on in India along with other Indians, in spite of some of the special privileges which they have been enjoying in educational matters.

Sir, I would not take up much time of the House. This motion relates entirely to the facilities given to educational institutions--institutions which require facilities for their removal to other safer zones—by way of rent for the new buildings, furniture and other equipments, travelling and other expenses for students and staff to new areas and continuity of certain grants or subsidy, permitting them to function in other areas. They also further wanted, so far as the old institutions were concerned, some nucleus to be maintained in the areas where they were functioning and a certain amount of help.

With these words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I will not move the motion standing in my name, but I will support the motion of my honourable friend, Maulvi Hafizuddin Chaudhury. His motion deals with the indifference shown by Government to the Bengal Secondary Education Bill. As has been pointed out by Maulvi Hafizuddin Chaudhury, Sir, the Secondary Education Bill is as old as 1940. Sir, the first Select Committee sat for a pretty long time and submitted its report and the Bill was actually taken up for consideration and good progress was made in the passage of the Bill in this House. But with the fall of the last Ministry the Bill has been shelved and nothing has been heard of it for months past. Sir, the Hindus were against this Bill and they succeeded in their attempt to create a split in the Muslim community and, taking full advantage of that split in our ranks, they have been able to put back the much-needed educational reform contemplated in the Secondary Education Bill. Sir, that Bill was

introduced on the recommendation of the Saddler Commission on the insistent demand of the Muslim and Scheduled Caste communities and that of every right-thinking man of the province, and the present Ministry, when it came into office, as well as the Progressive Coalition Party members including the Krishak Proja Party members, gave an undertaking that they would put that Bill on the statute book as soon as possible after their assumption of office, and they also assured us that they would bring forward, a Bill in the very first session of the Assembly after their acceptance of office. Sir, this Ministry came into office in December, 1941, and this is March, 1943—rather the latter part of March. This Bill, after they assumed office, was again referred back to a Select Committee and that Select Committee actually sat for some days. But that Select Committee had had to be dissolved, never to sit again, and now in the present session we find that although it was originally given a place in the agenda of business of this Assembly it was again taken out of the agenda for reasons which are best known to the Ministry. We do not know, Sir, what will be the fate of the Secondary Education Bill, but my apprehension and the apprehension of my party is that so long as the present Ministry remains in office, the Bill will never see the light of the day. The present Ministry will never dare to offend their Hindu supporters; they will sit tight over the Bill. My friends supporting the Ministry know full well how persistent and insistent the demand is throughout the country, particularly among the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes, to have this Bill passed, and when they were returned from their constituencies they gave the solemn pledge to their constituents that the Bill would be pushed through and passed if they were returned. But as soon as they were returned to the Assembly they forgot everything about the Bill. Sir, my point is that the Ministry had been hoodwinking the Muslim public who had been persistently demanding the passing of this Bill. Now, they will take the plea that during wartime no controversial legislation can be taken up and on that plea they will shelve the Bill once for all.

Sir, I want a categorical reply from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Bill will see the light of the day during this session. Sir, a Special Officer in the person of Dr. Jenkins was appointed for this Bill, but in spite of his efforts nothing has come to fruition. The Select Committee report was already published and was taken up in the open House. So, I want a categorical reply from the Hon'ble Minister whether this Bill will be introduced this session and will be taken into consideration during this session.

With these words I support the motion moved by my honourable friend Mr. Hafizuddin Choudhuri.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the urgency of granting suitable relief to teachers of schools affected through the present emergency.

Sir, I had already said in connection with a previous motion how the institutions in Calcutta and other emergency areas have suffered due to the approach of war conditions. The institutions have suffered and at the same time have suffered the number of teachers of those institutions, those helpless and hapless class of people who have all along worked for the best interests of the society at paltry remuneration. It is well known how the teachers in Bengal are ill-paid, and these ill-paid teachers were faced with a situation which is nothing short of disaster during December, 1941, and thereafter because of large scale evacuation of the pupils and the consequential loss of fee income of the institutions and Government's apathy in coming forward to support the institutions by paying suitable amounts to enable the institutions to pay their quota. For some months Government made an attempt to subsidise or to help in the subsidising of a certain number of institutions which they wanted to call centralised schools, particularly those relating to the girls' education in the city. It appears that those girls' centralised schools also have not been running properly, and at the present moment I understand that practically the old system has reverted with very poor attendance in the centralised schools. Whatever may be the fate of the institutions, the position with regard to the teachers continues even today to be extremely unhappy. For only two months, viz., during September and October last, Government was prepared to advance about one lakh of rupees for the amelioration of the distress of the teachers. That was not because of the difficulties faced by the institutions on account of war conditions, but due to the situation created through the disturbances following the large scale arrests of Congress leaders in August, 1942. It was only more or less to ease the political situation that the Government thought fit to advance one lakh of rupees, but what about the economic difficulties through which the teachers have been passing all these months, not merely during September and October, 1942, but right from December, 1941, down to today? Hardly any attempt has been made to see that these unfortunate persons get even two square meals a day for themselves and their dependents. We were told at one stage that Government had certain schemes ready to re-employ these unemployed or under-employed teachers in various kinds of A.R.P. and other Civil Defence work. Many applications were received by the University from teachers for suitable A.R.P. jobs, but unfortunately in spite of repeated enquiries we could not discover a suitable number of available jobs where these teachers could be fitted in. I understand that at the present moment Government again has got a scheme for rationing under which a very large number of persons may be required in Calcutta as well as in dangerous areas like Chittagong and other places. What stands in the way of employing these unemployed teachers for such rationing scheme work I cannot perceive. I therefore submit that let Government have some comprehensive planning in this direction. Here there is no question of party politics. It is a question of appreciating the work done by a set of persons who have without any grudge or murmur served the society with the best that they could produce and have tried to help in the building up of a new nation by educating

your children and my children. It is only meet and proper that their interests should be looked into and safeguarded by the Government of the day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Abdula-al Mahmood.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Shall I move my motion, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not move. A similar motion has already been moved, and it will be better if you only speak on that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I submit, Sir, that it will be convenient if all the speeches on the Secondary Education Bill be made after the other motions are moved?

Mr. SPEAKER: All right. Let the other motions be moved formally. Dr. Sanyal, you move your next motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by a sum of Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the requisitioning of buildings of educational institutions for military or civil purposes without making proper arrangements for the continuance of the work of such institutions.

It is well known, Sir, that whenever there was a question of requisitioning, the first victims were the educational institutions. Not only this affected the city of Calcutta and its suburbs, but a policy of this character was noticed throughout Bengal and, Sir, vandalism went so far that girls' education was practically brought to a standstill by a deliberate policy of taking over girls' school buildings and girls' college buildings first. I do not know if our British masters have developed the sense that there is no use educating the girls in this province of Bengal any more. But, Sir, we submit that on the education of our motherhood depends so largely the building up of a nation that we cannot afford to neglect that side completely or even to the extent that the Government policy would lead to. Sir, there is also some amount of strong feeling entertained by some of us in this connection, viz., that wherever girls' institutions have been taken over a certain class of military people have been put in who defiled that sacred temple of learning by introducing debauchery in those buildings. Sir, in Mymensingh when the Vidyamoyee Girls' School, the best girls' institution on that side named after a revered lady of a family well-known in East Bengal, the very first evening when that building was taken possession of, prostitutes were brought into the building and the building was desecrated. This is the kind of thing to which we, at least those of us who hold girls' institutions with some amount of feeling, take very strong exception. Sir, in Calcutta the Bethune College and the Bethune Collegiate building was taken away, and I understand that after a great deal of agitation and representation from various quarters recently Government have been pleased to permit the reopening of that institution in another building. In other parts of Bengal similar things have been happening and, Sir, what is

more surprising is—I do not want to bring in communal considerations—that wherever we find Hindu students predominating, the officials have no hesitation in breaking up that institution as soon as they find it possible. Here were two institutions in Calcutta, Hare School and Hindu School, side by side. The building of the Hindu School which was established under a big charitable endowment was taken away, and the boys of the Hindu School were required to come over to the Hare School for their morning classes. The boys of the Hindu School fight with the boys of the Hare School and the teachers of the Hindu School fight with the teachers of the Hare School; and when the Hindu School boys come they find next morning that the Hare School teachers had removed everything from the board, and this is hapenning every day. I submit, Sir, that this is surely not the method by which we can advance the cause of education.

I have also another bitter experience. In my own college where I had my humble training, the Berhampore College, the college hostel building was taken over peremptorily, but no arrangement was made by Government even up to this day for giving suitable contribution to the college to enable it to have a suitable building of its own for the accommodation of the students or to enable it to continue to have similar accommodation for the students that were sent out from the hostel. The hostel building was taken over not for military purposes, not for civil defence work, but to accommodate certain rifled policemen. This could have been done elsewhere and even temporary huts could have been constructed to accommodate them. This is a state of affairs to which I would like the attention of the House to be seriously drawn to. Education requires a better approach and a better handling. On the other hand, what do we find when we come across European and Anglo-Indian schools or colleges that are requisitioned? The building of a particular institution in Free School Street was found to be necessary for military or other purposes. Immediately the entire European machinery of the Educational Directorate set in motion and ran from one part of Calcutta to another and found one of the finest buildings in Calcutta and not only got immediate possession of the building but also provided ample facilities, financial or otherwise, to get that building suitably protected for A.R.P. at Government cost to enable the students to go over there. That is the position to which we take strong exception. Where we find Indian schools and colleges not being properly looked after, we find, at the same time, lavish expenses are incurred for providing not only suitable accommodation but also better accommodation for schools and colleges where European and Anglo-Indian boys and girls are taught. We submit, Sir, that Government should revise the entire policy in this regard.

(Mr. Speaker then called on Mr. Wordsworth to move the motion standing in his name.)

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, with your permission I wish to hand over an adjournment motion which I would like to move.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are in the midst of the Budget Discussion. This is not the time for that. You can hand it over if you like; it does not require my permission.

Mr. Wordsworth.

Mr. W. C. WORDSWORTH: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, this motion of mine is supposed to initiate a discussion on the recommendations of the Sargent Committee, but that is optimistic. We shall have no time for discussion, and I understand that the report is not yet generally in the hands of the public. It is as yet confidential, but only in the sense that it has not yet been presented to the Government of India and therefore not to the Provincial Governments. And if I have a copy of the report, those who are keen on the matter can know what is going on, and it is not to be inferred that I have used stealthy means to outflank the defence of any confidential clerk. Mr. John Sargent is the Educational Commissioner to the Government of India. He has presided over, is presiding over, and will be called to preside over a large number of committees. The committee with which we are now concerned deals with the training and qualifications of teachers. I have no time for details. I may mention that out of its ten members two came from Bengal, namely, the Director of Public Instruction and one European businessman and industrialist who used to be a member of our group but nowadays is doing important work in the Supply Department of the Government of India.

This important report deals with a question far ahead of us—a very important question. It asks, What sort of education does India need to be in the very forefront of the advanced nations, how can this be secured and who will pay? The question is large, and the answer is very large, staggeringly large, except that in these days of large war figures we never find our emotions staggered by any figures. India, it says, can provide a system of education worthy of herself if only she makes the effort. Some details I must give. All teachers, the report says, in a country's educational system should be qualified both by knowledge and by competence to impart that knowledge. In India no one should be allowed to teach unless he is at least a Matriculate. Everyone must be trained, and all teachers should be treated by the country as professional men doing work of the highest importance to the State. Only graduates should be employed in high schools. The grades of pay of teachers in primary school should range from Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 and in high schools from Rs. 75 to Rs. 150; the heads should be paid in primary schools between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100; in middle schools between Rs. 80 and Rs. 130; and in high schools between Rs. 175 and Rs. 500. The teachers, it insists again and again, should be regarded as doing work no less important than any other kind of professional or administrative work. A teacher's reward should be not only in his pay, though that should be in accordance with the work he does, but it should

also be in social status and social regard. The cost is not worked out in the report, but I think it would work out for Bengal at about Rs. 16 to 20 crores.

On this I may make three observations: (1) India's resources are as yet little developed and the country can well afford a very much higher standard of living for everyone than it now provides; (2) the division of revenues between the Centre and the provinces is not fixed for all time; and (3) the Government of India should reasonably be expected to pay a large part of the cost of any national improvement.

In Britain, for elementary education, the cost is fairly evenly divided between central revenues paid from the taxes and local revenues provided by rates.

You may say there is no immediate urgency in this report. Teachers will disagree. But we are called to reflect earnestly on a great matter. Does India wish to be in the forefront of educated countries? And will it make the necessary sacrifice to this end or, we must ask, will it go on believing that the devotion of a few teachers and the poverty of all teachers is a satisfactory basis on which to build up a system of education in this great country? We should remember that education is more than schools, teachers and pupils. It is an aspect of the national life and what the nation spends on it, it is spending for its own betterment, assuring its own future generation after generation. It is not paying out, but paying into itself. The report says—I quote its words: "Teachers in primary and middle stages on whom the efficiency of the whole system depends are paid at rates inferior to those paid to most classes of menials"; and it castigates this attitude.

The report is short, modest and clear. It is a trumpet-call calling upon us to do some hard thinking now and holding out some hints that in time to come we must make some hard decisions. When the report is made public, if the educated classes of India and all legislators in this country give it the same earnest attention that teachers are likely to give it, it will be a good thing for our education.

Mr. JAGAT CHANDRA MANDAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the inadequacy of provision for the advancement of the education of the Scheduled Castes in the budget of 1943-44, making the office of the Special Officer, Scheduled Caste Education, permanent, and providing an annual recurring grant of Rs. 5 lakhs for their education.

Sir, it is a well-known fact that under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Hindu community has been politically divided into two classes—the Caste Hindus and the Scheduled Castes. Those Hindus who are educationally and politically backward are classed as Scheduled Castes in order to give them adequate representations to the self-governing

institutions and to the public services on the basis of their numerical strength and also to give them special educational facilities and political privileges. But the present Cabinet without paying any heed to the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935 is going to give a death-blow to the healthy rise of the Scheduled Castes, educationally and politically. The Scheduled Castes form nearly one-fifth of the total population of the province, and, as agriculturists they pay a very large part of the total revenue, and the percentage of their literacy is also very meagre.

Sir, although the Cabinet budgeted Rs. 1,67,56,000 for education, only they repeated the previous year's amount of Rs. 1,50,000 for the education of the Scheduled Castes but curtailed a Scheduled Caste member of the Cabinet and thereby reduced Rs. 40,000 as salary of a Scheduled Caste member of the Cabinet for the last 16 months. So practically the Cabinet has given Rs. 1,10,000 only, decreasing the amount set apart for the previous year, and thus showing plantains to their supporters, and I doubt whether my friends have noted this trick.

On population basis we are entitled to one-fifth of the total amount set apart for education, but at present our demand is only for a recurring grant of Rs. 5 lakhs *plus* Rs. 40,000 as the salary of a Scheduled Caste Minister of the Cabinet for the last 16 months and also the confirmation of the office of Special Officer for Scheduled Caste Education with its proper staff and equipment. It is extremely to be regretted that though the number of Scheduled Caste students is increasing year after year, the provision for their education is remaining stationary or is rather decreasing. This shows the sympathy and justice of the so-called National Ministry towards the advancement of education of the Scheduled Castes of the province.

Sir, during the previous Ministry a Scheduled Caste hostel was established in Comilla town. That Communal Ministry looked after the interests of all the different communities, but this National Ministry has practically abolished that hostel for Scheduled Caste boys at Comilla and the monthly grant has been reduced by this Ministry from Rs. 50 to Rs. 10 only per month. This has served a death-blow to the healthy growth and rise of the Scheduled Castes in this province and to the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Gupta, it is not necessary for you to move your cut motion No. 51. I think you can speak on the subject after the other cut motions have been moved.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: All right, Sir.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I want to raise a discussion on the discontinuance by the authorities of the Pabna College of the facilities that were being enjoyed by the Muslim students of the college to say their prayers in a room that was set apart for the purpose.

Sir, my motion is self-explanatory. As Mr. Abdulla-al Mahmood who comes from the district where this college is situated is fully aware of the facts, I do not like to say anything. I hope you will kindly allow him to speak on this motion.

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, in moving this cut motion I intend to raise a discussion on the question of Madrasah Education in Bengal.

মাননীয় Speaker মহোদয়, আমি শিক্ষা খাতের ব্যয় বরাদ্দ ১,৬৭,৫৬,০০০৲ টাকা হইতে একশত কমাইবার জন্য একটী ছাটাই প্রস্তাব আনিয়াছি। আমার এই ছাটাই প্রস্তাব আনার উদ্দেশ্য হইল, বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে অমনোযোগিতা ও উদাসীনতার সমালোচনা করা এবং প্রাইমারি শিক্ষায় দীনিয়াত শিক্ষার উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা না থাকায় মুসলমান ছেলেমেয়েদের যে অপূরণীয় ক্ষতি হইতেছে, সে সম্বন্ধে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অবহিত করিয়া তাহার প্রতিকারের জন্য অনুরোধ করা।

মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করিতে গেলে old scheme মাদ্রাসার কথাই প্রথম বলতে হয়। যেহেতু এই schemeই পূর্ব্বাপর চলিয়া আসিয়াছে এবং আরবি শিক্ষার মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য কোরাণ, হাদিস ও দীনিয়াত শিক্ষা এই old scheme মাদ্রাসাতেই সুচারু-রূপে সম্পাদিত হইয়া থাকে। এক কথায় বলতে গেলে বাংলাদেশে ইসলাম ধর্ম্ম টিকিয়া থাকিবার জন্য এই old scheme মাদ্রাসাগুলিই একমাত্র অবলম্বন। আমি একবাক্যে বলতে পারি, খোদা না করুন, যদি আজ ঐ old scheme মাদ্রাসাগুলি উঠিয়া যায়, তবে আগামী কাল ইসলাম বলিতে এদেশে কিছুই থাকিবে না। কুফরীর কুয়াশায় সমস্ত দেশ আচ্ছন্ন হইয়া যাইবে। আজ মুসলমানরা যে পাকিস্থানের জন্য উঠিয়া পড়িয়া লাগিয়াছে, সেই পাকিস্থান পরিকল্পনা তাদের ব্যর্থ হইয়া যাইবে—যেহেতু মুসলমানরা ইসলামিক শিক্ষার অভাবে অনিস-লামিক জীবন যাপন করিতে থাকিবে। আমার মতে যে পাকিস্থানের জন্য মুসলমানরা প্রাণপণে চেষ্টা করিতেছে, সেই পাকিস্থান প্রচেষ্টা হইতেও মাদ্রাসা প্রতিষ্ঠানের মূল্য অনেক বেশী—যেহেতু মাদ্রাসা প্রতিষ্ঠান বাঁচলে ইস্‌লাম বাঁচবে, পাকিস্থানও বাঁচবে; আর মাদ্রাসা প্রতিষ্ঠান মরে গেলে, ইস্‌লাম মরবে, পাকিস্থানও মরবে। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয়, এদেশে ইস্‌লাম ও পাকিস্থানের ভিত্তিস্বরূপ মাদ্রাসা প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতি আমার মুসলমান ভাইদের আদৌ মনোযোগ নাই। তাঁহারা এই প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলিকে কোন কাজের জিনিষ বলিয়া যেন মনে করেন না; অধিকন্তু কেহ কেহ এগুলিকে অবজ্ঞার চক্ষেও দেখিয়া থাকেন। প্রমাণ স্বরূপ বলিতে পারি, এ যাবৎ আমরা Assemblyতে আসবার পূর্ব্ব পর্য্যন্ত এই মাদ্রাসাগুলিকে সরকারী সাহায্য হইতে বঞ্চিত করিয়া রাখা হইয়াছিল। নেতৃস্থানীয় কোন মুসলমানই এদিকে দৃষ্টিপাত করেন নাই। পক্ষান্তরে তদানীন্তন গভর্ণমেণ্ট ও নেতৃমণ্ডলীর যেন ইচ্ছা ছিল যে এই মাদ্রাসাগুলি মাটিতে মিশিয়া যাক। ১৯৩৭ সনে আমরা এসেম্বলীতে আসার পর old scheme মাদ্রাসায় সাহায্য দিবার জন্য বিশেষ তোড়জোর করলে পর তৎকালীন শিক্ষামন্ত্রী, বাংলার উজিরে আজম মাননীয় হক সাহেব বাংলার

old scheme মাদ্রাসাগুলিতে সাহায্য দিবার ব্যবস্থা করেন কিন্তু এই সাহায্যের পরিমাণ এত কম ছিল যে সবগুলি মাদ্রাসায় সাহায্য দেওয়া সম্ভবপর হয় নাই। বিশেষতঃ যেগুলিতে সাহায্য দেওয়া হইয়াছিল, তাহাও প্রয়োজনীয়তার অনুপাতে অর্দ্ধেকের বেশী নয়। এই মাদ্রাসাগুলি কোনটা বিনা সাহায্যে, কোনটা বা অর্দ্ধ সাহায্য নিয়া কত যে দুঃখ, দারিদ্রের ভিতর দিয়ে অগ্রসর হইতেছে, তাহার ইয়ত্তা নাই। এই দুর্দ্দিনে সরকারী ও আধা-সরকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের শিক্ষকদিগকে dearness allowance, দেওয়া হইয়াছে কিন্তু এই হতভাগা মোল্লাদের জন্য কিছুই করা হয় নাই। General Educationএ মেধাবী ছাত্রদের জন্য A. D. P. I. stipend ব্যবস্থা করিয়া থাকেন কিন্তু মাদ্রাসার মেধাবী ছাত্রের বেলায় ঐ নিয়ম খাটে না। মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার্থী ছাত্রদের উচচ শিক্ষার জন্য বাংলায় একটী আরবি দারুল উলুম (ইউনিভারসিটি) প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে আমি বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে বারংবার অনুরোধ জানাইয়া আসিয়াছি এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টও এ বিষয় প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়াছিলেন কিন্তু এখন আর কিছুই শোনা যাইতেছে না। মাদ্রাসা পাশ করিয়া ছেলেদের চিকিৎসা বিদ্যায় পারদর্শিতা লাভ করিতে হইলে তাহাদিগকে দিল্লি ও লক্ষ্ণৌ তিব্বিয়া কলেজে আশ্রয় নিতে হয় এবং অনুরূপ ছাত্রদের শতকরা ২ জনও খরচের অভাবে এই সব কলেজে যাইয়া পড়িতে পারে না। তাই গভর্ণমেণ্টকে বাংলাদেশে যে কোন সহরে একটী তিব্বিয়া কলেজ খুলিতে আমি পূর্ব্ব হইতেই বিশেষ অনুরোধ জানাইয়া আসিতেছি। গভর্ণমেণ্ট এ বিষয়ে আশা দিয়া একটী তিব্বিয়া শিক্ষা কমিটীর গঠন করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া জানাইয়াছিলেন কিন্তু ফলাফল আর জানা গেল না। মাদ্রাসা উত্তীর্ণ ছেলেরা ইউনানী চিকিৎসায় পারদর্শী হইলে দেশের গরীব লোকের চিকিৎসার দিক দিয়া বিশেষ উপকার হইত। তাই তিব্বিয়া কলেজ প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য বিশেষ আবদার জানাইতেছি। মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার উন্নতিকল্পে "মাদ্রাসা কমিটী" গঠন হইয়াছিল; আমি নিজেও ঐ কমিটীর মেম্বর ছিলাম। কমিটীর কাজ পরিসমাপ্তির পূর্ব্বেই কমিটী বন্ধ করা হইয়াছে। শুনিতে পাই, বর্ত্তমান শিক্ষা মন্ত্রী মহোদয় নাকি এ সব বাজে শিক্ষার কমিটীতে একেবারেই নারাজ। মোট কথা দীনিয়াত শিক্ষার উন্নতিকল্পে আরবি ভাষার উন্নতি আমাদের নেতারা মোটেই চান না।

মাদ্রাসা পাশ মৌলবী সাহেবদিগকে সবরেজেষ্ট্রী চাকুরী দিবার যে নিয়ম রহিয়াছে সেই নিয়মমত প্রতি বৎসর ২।১ জন মৌলভী সাহেবকে চাকুরির প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়াও গভর্ণমেণ্ট তাহা কাজে পরিণত করিতেছেন না।

মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার আলোচনা করিতে যাইয়া আমি কোরাণ শিক্ষার উপর বিশেষ জোর দিতেছি। যেহেতু কোরাণ শিক্ষাই আরবি শিক্ষার মূল কিন্তু বাংলায় ভালমত কোরাণ শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা খুব কমই আছে। আর যা ছিল তাহাও অভাবের তাড়নায় লুপ্ত হইতে বসিয়াছে। কোরাণ শিক্ষার স্বতন্ত্র ব্যবস্থা অপরিহার্য্য হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। তাই মস্‌জিদগুলিকে কেন্দ্র করিয়া মুসলমানদের ছোট ছেলেমেয়েদিগকে শুদ্ধ করিয়া কোরাণ পড়বার ব্যবস্থা সহজেই করা যাইতে পারে। সেখানে ঘর ও আসবাবপত্রের কথা উঠে না। ছেলেমেয়েরা মস্‌জিদে বসিয়াই কোরাণ পাঠ করিতে পারে। মাত্র ইমামের জন্য মাসিক অন্ততঃ দশ টাকা সাহায্যের ব্যবস্থা হইলেই হয়। আমার বন্ধুরা হয়ত আমাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিবেন যে এই টাকা কোথা হইতে আসিবে। তদুত্তরে আমি বলিতে চাই যে এই ব্যয়ের এক অংশ হাজি মোঃ মোহসেন ফণ্ড হইতে দেওয়া হউক। যেহেতু ইহার সম্পত্তির আয়ের একাংশ দ্বারা বহুদিন পর্য্যন্ত বাংলার বুকে আলিয়া মাদ্রাসা নামে পরিচিত কয়েকটী মাদ্রাসা পরিচালিত হইয়া আসিতেছিল। কালক্রমে মাত্র ২৫।২৬ বৎসর পূর্ব্বে সেই মাদ্রাসাগুলিকে new scheme এ পরিবর্ত্তিত করার একদিকে যেমন মরহুম হাজি

মো: মোহসিনের উদ্দেশ্য ব্যর্থ হইয়াছে। অন্য দিকে তাহার নামের পরিবর্তে মাদ্রাসাগুলি গভর্ণমেণ্ট মাদ্রাসা নামে অভিহিত হইয়াছে কিন্তু এই অন্যায়ের প্রতি আমাদের নেতৃবর্গের কেহ একটু টু শব্দ পর্য্যন্ত করেন নাই। যেদিন হাজি মো: মোহসিন সাহেব সংসার ত্যাগ করেন, তখন ইংরেজী ভাষা এ দেশে আসে নাই। লোকেরা তখনও দক্ষিণ হইতে বাম দিকে লিখিতে অভ্যস্ত ছিল। বিশেষত: মরহুম হাজি সাহেব যে একজন বিশেষ দীনদার, কোরাণভক্ত ও কোরাণপাঠ-কারী মোসলমান ছিলেন তাহার হস্তে কোরাণ-ধরা ফটোখানাই তার জাজ্জ্বল্যমাণ প্রমাণ দিতেছে। এমতাবস্থায় এই কোরাণভক্ত মুসলমানের টাকাগুলি তাহার বাঞ্ছিত শিক্ষায় ব্যয় না করিয়া—অবাঞ্ছিত শিক্ষায় ব্যয় করিয়া গভর্ণমেণ্ট কত যে অন্যায় করিতেছেন তাহা বলা যায় না। তাই আমি বলি হাজি মোহসেন ফণ্ডের টাকাগুলি কোরাণ শিক্ষা ও old scheme শিক্ষায় ব্যয়িত হউক। কোরাণ শিক্ষার বাকী ব্যয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট বহন করুন।

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, I do not like to take much time of the House but I will only remind my friends, especially my friends opposite, with regard to the fate of the Secondary Education Bill. The original Bill was first brought in in 1940, but it is now for all practical purposes dead. Then, Sir, a subsequent Bill was brought in in 1942 which was referred to a Select Committee on 2nd April, 1942. The Select Committee sat for a few days when a difficulty arose and the fate of the Bill was sealed. When a strong protest was lodged by the Opposition, Mr. Badrudduja of the Progressive Coalition Group vehemently opposed us saying that his party would see that the Secondary Education Bill was put on the statute book as early as possible, and that if the Secondary Education Bill was not put on the statute book his section of the party would withdraw their support to the Ministry. I would ask Mr. Badrudduja to enlighten us as to what action has been taken on this Bill since 2nd April, 1942. As you are aware, Sir, after the Bill was discussed in the Select Committee for some days the question was raised with regard to the legality or otherwise of the Hon'ble Minister in charge presiding over the deliberations of that Committee. The matter was raised in this House by means of a question in the September session and the reply was that the matter had been referred to the Advocate-General for his opinion. Since then we have been in the dark and do not know what step Government have taken in this matter. We do not know whether the Hon'ble the Education Minister whose days are numbered is still thinking of this Bill or whether the Bill is now dead and gone. To this question we want a definite and a specific reply from the Hon'ble the Education Minister. The Hon'ble Minister was heard to say on the floor of this House that the Secondary Education Bill was not dead but was still alive just like the Noah's Ark which he is preparing in the shape of the Secondary Education Bill in which will be accommodated both the Hindus and the Muslims alike when tempestuous torrents will be falling outside. Leaving that aside, Sir, I would now ask the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in all humility what he has done up till now with regard to the Secondary Education Bill——

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not want to interrupt you, Mr. Mahmood, but are you speaking on Mr. Tamizuddin Khan's motion or not?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, I have already submitted to you that there is a motion standing in my name on the Secondary Education Bill on which I wish to speak a few words before I deal with the motion moved by my friend, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the time at your disposal is very short.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: I think, Sir, I am entitled to get double the time, five minutes for my motion and another five minutes for the motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you calculate on that basis, you will perhaps have to wait for days to have a chance to speak.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: However, Sir, I shall try to be very brief. Sir, it is useless to dilate much upon this matter because we know from this Ministry nothing can be expected. They have not done anything and they will not be able to do anything. We say, Sir, that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee was the author of the Bill of 1942 and the Bill of 1941 that is now dead was so due to him. Though Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee is now out of office, we know that it is at his bidding that the Ministry is working. We want a definite and categorical reply from the Hon'ble Education Minister with regard to the Secondary Education Bill, 1942. The other day we received a notice saying that the next meeting of the Secondary Education Bill will be held on the 24th March at 10-30 a.m. We are at a loss to understand what purpose will be served by holding a meeting of the Select Committee. In the agenda paper of this session, which was circulated to us, we find that another Bill—Secondary Education Bill—is going to be introduced in this House. How funny these things are. I shall be very glad if the Hon'ble Minister once more rises in his seat and announces before the Assembly what he has in his mind and what he wants to do with regard to the passing of the Secondary Education Bill.

Now, Sir, I come to the Pabna College. As my time is very short I shall be very brief. Now, Sir, since the issue of a circular from the Education Department the Muslim students of the Pabna College were given facilities to offer their prayers. After having approached the Principal repeatedly the Principal agreed that a room of the College which was lying vacant would be given to them for saying their midday prayer which is a silent prayer. As for other prayers the students would go to the hostel or those who lived outside would go to their respective homes and say their prayers there. Now, what happened was this. The Muslim students bought the necessary things for performing the prayer and stored them in the room allotted by the Principal. After a day or two when the Muslim students were saying their prayer the Hindu students assembled in front of that room and began to play music with dhol, kartal and other similar instruments. On the second day the Muslim students immediately approached the Principal and reported the matter to him. The Principal

without taking any action against the Hindu students and without calling the students with a view to making an amicable settlement, all on a sudden issued a notice debarring the Muslim students from saying their prayers and put the room under lock and key. Then on the next day, as there was no space in the Muslim hostel of the Pabna Edward College, the Muslim students decided to say their prayer in the open *maidan*. When they were saying their prayer in the lawn in front of their hostel, a similar occurrence took place. All the Hindu boys came out and held a similar demonstration. This matter was brought to the notice of the Managing Committee and it is well known how the matter was decided by the Managing Committee. Some representatives of the students came here and approached the Chief Minister and the Education Minister and they also approached us. We did not like that they should make any procession to ventilate their grievances because our friends will then say that the Muslim Leaguers are making a capital out of this. Sir, I asked my friend Mr. Abdul Wahab Khan to put a question through Mr. Syed Badrudduja because he is a party member and Government may take some action, but the answer has not seen the light of the day.

Now, Sir, the funny thing is that the Education Minister, who shows that he is such a religious man and even on the Secondary Education Bill he tried to prove that he is a religious man by saying that he would wipe away the sin of the past, said that these were petty matters and that the students should not bother about these. We do not find any reason why the students should come and report falsely against the Education Minister and I shall be glad if the Education Minister will say if he has taken any action in this matter. They sent in representations to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and through Maulana Abdur Rezzak and Maulvi Azhar Ali and Mr. Abdul Wahab Khan. We requested that these things must be brought to an end and a satisfactory solution must be found because both the students and the mass had been agitated. We do not know if the Chief Minister has taken any action. I rang up the Director of Public Instruction with regard to this matter. I am informed that action has already been taken, but what action has been taken we do not know. I would like to know specially from the Muslim Ministers as to what they are going to do—whether they will allow the Muslim students to say their prayers which is their right.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the case for the people against the State is——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, do you think that the ministerial benches should be empty?

(At this stage some Hon'ble Ministers entered the Chamber.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: As I was saying, Sir, the case for the people against the State is that the Ministry has betrayed the people in not

taking adequate steps to place the Secondary Education Bill on the statute book. There can now be little doubt in the minds of members of this House and of the larger public beyond that this new Ministry came into power with the express object of sabotaging the Bengal Secondary Education Bill. We, who fought for the Bill step by step in the old Ministry, know it was so, but it has remained for the passage of time to make this clear, without the possibility of contradiction, to the people at large.

Sir, I will not go into the merits of the Bill as drafted by the previous Ministry or as amended by the previous Select Committee or as drafted by the present Ministry. There may be and must be divergence of views, but these are not of such a nature which cannot be adjusted with a certain amount of reasonableness and a genuine desire to see the other man's point of view. What stands out prominently is that not merely the Muslim community but the people of Bengal, the Hindus and Muslims and Europeans and other communities, all desire a Secondary Board of Education independent of the University, and this principle has been accepted by the House. During my tours I came across authorities of several Hindu schools and they were all looking forward to the Secondary Education Bill which would have placed their education, their schools and their grants on a proper footing. After long, almost at the end of the budget session last year, Government produced a fresh Bill and referred it to a Select Committee. The Select Committee meetings were convened for three days only in the middle of last year. On the third day the members were given definitely to understand that the Select Committee would be convened very shortly, say, within a month. After that we heard nothing about it. The question was raised in the September session and then the Ministry stated that there had been some difficulties regarding the eligibility of the Hon'ble Minister for Education who is a member of the Upper House to be a member of a Select Committee of the Assembly or to preside over it. Opinion had already been obtained from the Advocate-General and Government should by that time have made up its mind whether it should continue with the Select Committee or not or have a fresh Select Committee without the Hon'ble Minister. Time passed, but no steps were taken by Government in spite of its most solemn assurances even on that late day that Government would come to a decision very shortly.

I would recall to the minds of honourable members the speech delivered by Mr. Badrudduja when he definitely and categorically as Secretary of the Progressive Muslim Party stated that if Government did not pursue the legislation they would vote down the Government. The words which he used in a passionate manner were as follows: "I can assure my friends opposite (*i.e.*, ourselves) that we will not rest on our oars....." What oars he is plying today it is very difficult to appreciate. "We are going to see that the Secondary Education Bill is passed into law. There was a voice from the Opposition benches: When?" and Mr. Badrudduja like Mr. Asquith said, "Wait and you will see." "I am telling you in all sincerity," says Mr. Badrudduja, "but in all humility I am appealing to you to patiently listen to me. I am saying this in all sincerity but in all

humility that we feel that we cannot justify our existence". Will the honourable members opposite who belong to the Progressive Muslim Group kindly litsen? "We feel that we cannot justify our existence; we cannot justify the existence of the Government, we cannot justify our support to the Government till the Secondary Education Bill is placed on the statute book". I do not expect Mr. Badrudduja to do anything now but to swallow what he stated. Mr. Badrudduja has created a new technique in debate by attacking Ministers of Government on important matters. Indeed Mr. Badrudduja has no other choice, because he with his clearness of intellect can have no doubt in his mind that this Ministry has failed to tackle any important problem with which the Ministry has been confronted and therefore it is deserving of condemnation. He therefore attacks the Ministry vehemently and then prays for its long life and supports it with his vote. With the promise of a Ministry dangling before his eyes, I do not think Mr. Badrudduja will change his technique. But may I request the other members of his party on whose behalf Mr. Badrudduja spoke and all of whom have not been promised appointments as Ministers to carry out the promises made in this House and to the Opposition? For what has the Ministry done to further the prospects of this Bill? Nothing. In the agenda of the first day this session there was an item that the Secondary Education Bill would be referred to a fresh Select Committee. That item was dropped and we heard nothing more about the Secondary Education Bill. We have just received a notice that there will be a meeting of the original Select Committee on Wednesday. What has happened suddenly which has led to the removal of all difficulties? If the original Committee can function, why was not the Select Committee convened earlier? If there is no legal difficulty in continuing the Select Committee, why were we not called, say, six months back so that the Bill by now would have assumed final shape and would have been ready for the Legislature? But if there is any difficulty still, why has the original Select Committee been called? The reason is obvious. This belated action is again on a par with the general method of the Ministry to hoodwink the House whenever there is a crisis. To every cut motion the reply has been "we the Ministry have failed to do anything, we the Ministry shall behave like good boys in future and we the Chief Minister and others accept everything which the Congress, the European Group, the Muslim League Group and the Scheduled Castes demand"—however conflicting may be the various demands. Every single assurance of this type, every attempt to evade punishment by large promises is tantamount to the clearest acceptance of censure and it should not at all be necessary for any voting to take place. How long, I ask the honourable members of this House, are we going to be hoodwinked in this manner by last-minute promises, assurances and by last-minute steps? How long is this House going to be treated with assurance after assurance which are never carried out and which are never meant to be carried out? How long are we going to be deluded into acquiescence by promises of better behaviour in future activated by cut motions? I would ask the House to stop this sorry farce once for all. The Ministry has definitely failed in its duty.

As regards the Secondary Education Bill, there can be no doubt in anybody's mind in this House and there can be no doubt in the mind of the members of the Progressive Coalition Party who must have tried to get an explanation from the Chief Minister, as to the reason for his failure to fulfil his promise. No discussion on the Bill can even be considered a discussion without reference to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. We know that the new Bill is Dr. Mookerjee's child but not his pet child and he would rather wish that it was dead. Hence this child is being starved and has been stowed away in a dark corner. Let not the honourable members hang on in this case at any rate to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee's apron-strings——

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up. Do you want more time?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, one minute will do.

His University is dearer to him than anything else and he cannot willingly be a party to a measure for an autonomous Secondary Education Board. Barring him, I think we can claim the support of all the members of this House—Hindus and Muslims—if only they would vote genuinely and throw aside personal, political and party considerations.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after this repeated performance of manuscript eloquence by my friend Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, indulging in deliberately chosen invectives, I desire to say a few words——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of personal explanation, Sir.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I am not going to give way.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, may I say as to why I wanted——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I am not going to give way. We are tired of this manuscript eloquence, repeating the same utterances. We want to hear something original.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is why I wanted to give an explanation.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I desire to say in the first place, while we are discussing the Education budget, that there are a few matters which require our immediate attention, if we are going to save education from ruin and disaster.

I am thinkful to my friend Mr. Wordsworth for having brought before the House a summary of the Sargent Committee Report. The points which he has placed before the House are of paramount importance for the re-building of our national life. I do not think, Sir, that there is any one in this House or outside who would not feel impressed by the argument that if education is to be saved, it is necessary that the teachers in whose hands the task of imparting education has been entrusted have to be saved from the clutches of ruin and disaster. What Mr. Sargent has said is nothing new. He has pointed out with remarkable lucidity and with that volume

of experience behind him which he possesses that one of the great drawbacks of the present educational system is that our teachers are extremely poorly paid and very often ill-equipped.

Now, Sir, if that has been the state of affairs under normal circumstances, today in view of the war condition and in view of other pressures on the funds which are normally available from private sources for expansion of education, the teachers are not even getting the small pittance which they used to receive in former days. Government came with a generous offer during the last Puja vacation to help the school teachers and also the teachers in the colleges in Calcutta. It was a small temporary relief but the teachers were thankful for even this generosity. I would like to ask the Minister for Education to announce his policy before the House for the information of the members as also for the information of the public outside. A few months back the Minister for Education in Great Britain, while giving a broadcast talk on the educational arrangements made in that country during the period of the war, took a natural pride in stating that next to the departments which required support in view of the war conditions, Education was the one department among the civil departments which had received the largest support from the State, far in excess of what Education used to receive in normal times. He pointed out, Sir, that it was essential for post-war reconstruction as also for carrying the war to a successful end that the educational institutions must not be allowed to starve. In fact, he stated with great significance that he did not allow one single educational institution to suffer during the period of the war. But what a sorry spectacle we find in this country! Of course, I know, Sir, that until and unless real power is transferred to the hands of the Indian people, subjects like Education will not receive that consideration which we the children of the soil want that Education should receive. We are spending lakhs and crores: the deficit of this province has run into more than two crores of rupees, and it does not matter in the least if the present Government with the sanction of all sections of the legislature decide to spend more for the purpose of saving the future of Education. Sir, I hope the Chief Minister and the Education Minister will both be able to make an announcement on this question to be followed in due course.

As regards the institutions which have been closed, there is one institution, namely, the Bethune Collegiate School which is about 100 years old, which has been shut down. Now, that has caused a good deal of resentment in public mind. This drastic action is entirely unjustifiable. We have appealed to the Chief Minister and to the Education Minister that the order for reopening of the Bethune Collegiate School should be issued. I have received an assurance and I believe they will also announce it publicly today that orders have already been passed that the Bethune Collegiate School should be reopened as soon as possible, not later than a fortnight from today's date.

With regard to the question which has been raised by several of my friends about the Secondary Education Bill, I shall just say a few words. Mr. Suhrawardy—I have never taken him very seriously and there are, I

think, very few people who take him seriously—suddenly discovered that barring myself everyone else wants the Secondary Education Bill to be passed into law. This is a notorious distortion of truth. The gentleman making the statement who happened to be a member of the Senate of the Calcutta University for a number of years, did not find time to attend more than half a dozen meetings. This is the sort of interest he showed in educational matters, but for political purposes he gets up and says with regard to the future of the secondary education in this province that my humble self has no interest in it at all and that I shall oppose the passage of the Secondary Education Bill.

Now, Sir, as I have explained my position, when Mr. Suhrawardy was in power, how on the plea of passing the Secondary Education Bill he and his friends really wanted to stifle the educational progress in this province, and as I have already made it clear in the Legislature, I say here publicly that we do want an autonomous Secondary Board of Education; we want it for the progress of Education; we want it for the expansion of Education; and we want that it would be really representative. We want it to be constituted in such manner that the academic interests will be paramount; we want the Bill to be so framed that it will have ample funds so that education of all sections of the community may progress——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Then why have you not taken any steps so long?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: The reasons why no steps were taken are well known to Mr. Suhrawardy and his friends. Certain legal difficulties were raised but it is not for me to state the reasons why the Select Comimttee did not meet so long. The Education Minister and the Chief Minister will lay before the House the opinion of the Advocate-General of Bengal on the question of legal difficulty that was raised——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I know that.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: The opinion given by the Advocate-General of Bengal was that the manner in which the Select Committee had elected its President was unconstitutional. That was the opinion given. The Chief Minister, I dare say, will be prepared to give an assurance with the full support of the Progressive Coalition Party that we are extremely anxious to see that the Secondary Education Bill is placed on the statute book as early as possible. Much as he may try, we shall not permit Mr. Suhrawardy and his friends to make political capital out of the Secondary Education Bill.

So far as the Pabna College affair is concerned, that is a matter which requires fuller consideration. Certain reports have reached us as to how there arose differences of opinion between the Hindu and Muslim students regarding the observance of certain religious festivities. A decision was reached by the Principal of the College, which is not a Government College, to allow the Muhammadan students to say their prayers in a college room——

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Do you deny the facts?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I am not denying the facts: I am stating the fact that there have been some differences of opinion which are fairly strong between the Hindu and the Muslim students and it is up to us, the guardians of Hindu and Muslim students alike, to see that these differences are wiped out in a manner which is satisfactory to both the communities. So far as that matter is concerned, Government, I hope, will institute an enquiry as to what is exactly the point and will ask for the co-operation of leaders of both communities, irrespective of the parties to which they may belong, so that such differences may not assume serious proportions. It should be borne in mind that this is an educational institution which is not a Government institution; it has also to be borne in mind that in institutions which receive Government aid perhaps strict observance of religious neutrality is the best for both the communities concerned. But if certain facilities are to be given for observance of religious rites outside the college premises, we may sit together and come to some formula whereby such differences might be amicably settled. With regard to the Pabna College affair, however, the Minister in charge will be able to declare that he is willing to have an enquiry made, if he has not already ordered it, for an amicable settlement of the differences between the two communities.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the policy of the Government to impart education to the masses is far below what is required in this country. Many things have been said during these five years but hardly any of them materialised. The education imparted is inadequate, both in quantity and quality because only about 8 out of every hundred of the total population can read and write, in quality because the education imparted is not sufficiently practical to prepare persons for the business of life. The greatest need of the day is mass elementary education which should be made both free and compulsory. It is understood that in Soviet Russia even secondary education is imparted free. In the United States of America the number attending was as high as 24 per cent. of the total population. One of the special ways of extending mass education is by giving instruction to adults in their spare times. The greatest drawback in our educational policy is the omission to give practical training to young and old in the use of modern tools and machinery, which is a part of the equipment needed for industrialisation. Mechanics and mechanical engineering should be taught at least to one quarter of the total number of students in the various grades of educational institutions, as they are essential equipment for practical work in agriculture, industry, transport, house-building and other occupations. It is a great and continued loss to the country that provision for such classes of education should be kept down so low as at present. In view of the inadequacy of technically trained men and skilled labourers to man large number of factories, farms and shops which are coming into being every year the instructions imparted in this country should be given a distinctly technical and professional bias. Polytechnization of schools must be the watchword for some years to come. The records of engineering and industrial education in Japan show that a

large number of engineering graduates are turned out every year from the Universities. There are higher industrial schools in that country with over 20,000 pupils, middle grade industrial schools with over 1,500,000 pupils and private industrial schools, higher and middle, with over 80,000 pupils. In addition to all these every year 300 of the most brilliant graduates are selected and sent abroad at the expense of the State for foreign study. A knowledge of mechanics, that is of tools and machinery, is one of the indispensable preparations for industrial life. By the use of machinery and motive power human drudgery has been greatly lightened, hours of labour required to produce a given volume of goods or services have been shortened and the workers have been enabled to enjoy a higher standard of living. It is known that the real wages of workers in Great Britain are about four times as greater now as they were a century ago. Provision should be made to give instructions in mechanical pursuits along with primary education. The defects which existed also in Russia in the Czarist regime is being removed by the establishment of factory schools and mechanical classes in large numbers. In that country the primary schools are equipped with hand and machine tools and basic materials for wood, cloth and paper products on account of the constant contact with industry throughout their school career, students become familiar with technical process of the industry in which they may be specialised. The rural population will never improve unless an appreciable proportion of it are trained for mechanical pursuits and taught to manufacture for themselves agricultural implements, house-building materials and furniture and other needs of efficient rural type.

Regarding finance I may mention here that the budget grant for education is very inadequate; it should be increased. President Roosevelt said, "In the State of New York, nearly one-third of all the expenditure of the State are going as aids to education".

Before I take my seat I would ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Education to approach the problem of adult education on the line which would render greater facilities to the masses to gain practical knowledge in tools and machineries.

Mr. BANKIM CHANDRA MUKHERJI : মাননীয় Speaker মহোদয়, Secondary Education Billএর বিতর্কের বহরে primary education হারিয়ে গিয়েছে। ধনী যেখানে অবকাতর গরীব ত সেখানে বিতাড়িত হয়ই। কিন্তু আজকে দেশের ভিতর একটা যুদ্ধের সমস্যার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই শিক্ষা যে প্রায় বন্ধ হয়ে আসছে এটাও কম সমস্যা নয়। ১২ লক্ষ টাকা Government বাঁচাতে পেরেছেন শিক্ষাকে মেরে; প্রায় ১২ লক্ষ। ওজুহাত যে যুদ্ধ। অথচ এর পূর্ব্বেও অন্যান্য মাননীয় সভ্যেরা বলেছেন এবং জানাও আছে যে যুদ্ধের সময়েতে চীনদেশে adult educationএর schemeটা সেখানে যুদ্ধের মধ্যেই আসে এবং স্ত্রী শিক্ষা বিষয়েতে যুদ্ধের মধ্যেই তারও scheme আসে এবং এই গত ৫।৬ বৎসরে যুদ্ধের ভিতরেই চীনের education সম্বন্ধে এক অদ্ভুত অভূতপূর্ব্ব পরিবর্ত্তন আসে। এত বড় বিরাট যুদ্ধের ভিতরেও Soviet Russia শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে ঢের বেশী করে, আগেকার চেয়েও বেশী বরাদ্দ করতে পেরেছে। এমন কি তাদের চেয়ে অপেক্ষাকৃত পশ্চাৎপদ England ও America

সেখানেও যুদ্ধের ওজুহাতে শিক্ষার পশ্চাতে বরাদ্দ বিশেষ ক্ষুণ্ণ হয়নি। অথচ এদেশে আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি যে প্রায় ১০ লক্ষ টাকা বেঁচেছে District Boardএ grant দেওয়া সম্বন্ধে। এই ১০ লক্ষ টাকা যেহেতু District Board headএ এই অজস্র অফুরন্ত fund জমা হয়ে রয়েছে অতএব এই টাকা আমরা বাঁচাতে পারি। যদি এত অজস্র fund ছিল District Boardএ, সেখানে Government স্বচ্ছন্দে ব্যবস্থা করতে পারতেন যে সেখানে grant দেওয়া হোক এবং তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে যেখানে একটি school খোলা দরকার, District Boardএর উপর তাদের দাবী জানাতে পারতেন যে তাঁরা ২টি school খুলুন। অথচ সেখানে অজস্র fund ছিল। তাতে করে এই ১০ লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় করলে পর বোধ হয় বিশ লক্ষ টাকার কাজ আদায় করতে পারা যেত এবং সেদিক থেকে সত্যি সত্যি শিক্ষার বিস্তৃতি হতে পারতো। আরো অপূর্ব্ব জিনিষ যে primary teachersদের training school যেহেতু নেই, কোন নূতন কেন্দ্র খোলা হবে না বলে সেটারও বরাদ্দ বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হোক্। এ প্রায় এক লক্ষ এগারো হাজার টাকা। নূতন schemeএ নূতন কোন কেন্দ্র খোলা হবে না; অর্থাৎ ভবিষ্যতেও primary educationকে আরো একটু বাড়াবার যা সম্ভাবনা ছিল, সেটাকেও এখন থেকে সঙ্কুচিত করে দেওয়া হোলো। অর্থাৎ যদি উপযুক্ত teachers না পাওয়া যায়, না তৈরি থাকে এর পরেও primary school গুলি বাড়ানো অত্যন্ত দুর্ঘট হয়ে উঠবে। সে বিষয়েও এখন থেকে তারই সম্ভাবনা তৈরি হয়ে রইল। এবং adult education—এতো এখন হতেই পারে না; কেন না যদি primary education সম্বন্ধে এই প্রকারের নীতি Government যুদ্ধের সময় নেওয়া অত্যন্ত উপযুক্ত মনে করেন তাহলে পরে সেই অবস্থায় adult education কল্পনা করাও যেতে পারে না। অথচ প্রত্যেক যুদ্ধমান জাতির এইটুকু বোধ আছে যে এই যুদ্ধের একটা মস্ত বড় প্রয়োজনীয় অংশ হচ্চে সমস্ত জনসাধারণের রাজনৈতিক জ্ঞান। এবং যদি জনসাধারণের সামান্য লেখাপড়াও জানা না থাকে, সাধারণ অক্ষর পরিচয়ও না থাকে একটা দেশের সমগ্র জাতির রাজনৈতিক জ্ঞান হওয়া অসম্ভব এবং সেদিক থেকেও প্রয়োজন,—সকল সময়ই অত্যন্ত বেশী দরকার, কিন্তু আজকে প্রয়োজন অত্যন্ত বেশী রকমের এই adult education এবং মাত্র এই টাকা নয়, তার চেয়ে বেশী টাকা দেওয়া উচিৎ। সর্ব্বশেষে আমি দেখছি এ বৎসরও আট লক্ষ টাকা primary Educationএর জন্য বরাদ্দ হয়েছে। আশা করি যে আসছে বছর আবার যেন না budgetএ দেখতে পাই যে এই আট লক্ষ টাকা বেঁচে গিয়েছে। অর্থাৎ প্রত্যেক বারেই Government budget করবার সময় শিক্ষা প্রভৃতি জাতিগঠনমূলক ব্যাপারেতে লম্বা লম্বা টাকা বরাদ্দ করবেন, করে তখনও বাহাবা নেবেন, budget আরম্ভ হবার সময় বাহবা নেবেন যে জাতি-গঠনমূলক কাজে এত লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় করছি। এবং পরের বৎসর সেই টাকাগুলি বাঁচিয়েও বাহবা নেবেন যে আমরা কি অপূর্ব্ব budget, আয় ব্যয় balance করতে পারছি। আমি আশা করি যে এই প্রহসন আর বেশী দিন চালানো উচিৎ হবে না; অন্ততঃ এই আট লক্ষ টাকা যেন ব্যয় হয়।

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK : মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয় : মেদিনীপুর জেলার তমলুক ও কাঁথীর শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলি জেলার কর্ত্তৃপক্ষের দ্বারা বন্ধ করে দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করা হচ্চে। সেখানকার যেসব M. E. schoolগুলি আছে তাদের recognition withdraw করে নেওয়া হয়েছে এবং যে সব high schoolগুলি আছে সেগুলির যাতে affiliation বন্ধ হয়ে যায়; affiliation withdraw করে নেওয়া হয় তার জন্য Universityকে লেখা

হয়েছে। তমলুকের high schoolএর যিনি head master ছিলেন তাঁকে political groundএ,—যে তাঁর schoolএর ছেলে মেয়ে political movementএ যোগ দিয়েছে অতএব তিনি অপদার্থ শিক্ষক, সেই হিসাবে তাঁকে dismiss করার ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে। সেখানকার schools যাতে না grant পায় তার ব্যবস্থা করা হচ্চে। এবং কাঁথী Collegeএর grant বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে। কাজেই A. V. schoolগুলি থেকে আরম্ভ করে high school এবং Collegeএ যাতে ছেলেরা শিক্ষা না পান তার ব্যবস্থা করা হচ্চে। একেই দুঃখ সেখানকার, সেখানে বন্যায় কাঁথী school পড়ে গিয়েছে, ছেলেদের পড়াবার ক্ষমতা নেই, গৃহস্থদের মাইনে দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা নেই, তার উপর কর্তৃপক্ষ এইরূপ। কাজেই কিছু দিনের জন্য সেখানকার লোক শিক্ষা পাবে না এই ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে। কাজেই মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে এ সম্বন্ধে নিবেদন করছি যাতে এই schoolগুলি disaffiliated না হয়, এবং যাঁরা Government grant পেয়েছেন তাঁরা যেন Government grant পান, এবং College'র grant যেন ঠিকমত থাকে। এই দুঃসময়ে যখন Government relief করছেন, তখন সেখানে শিক্ষকদের না খেতে পেয়ে মরবার ব্যবস্থা করা তাঁদের উচিৎ হয় না। কাযেই যাতে schoolএ grantগুলি ঠিক সময় পায় তার ব্যবস্থা করবেন।

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I always listen with attention to the speeches of the honourable member for the University of Calcutta, but today I must confess to a sense of disappointment. In his promptings to the Minister and perhaps to the Chief Minister as well, he forgot the whole of the past history of this unfortunate Secondary Education Board Bill. He began his speech by laying down before the House the fundamental principle of the nation being in charge of education. If that is an acceptable principle, then, Sir, in Bengal, gentlemen who are experts in education, gentlemen who feel that they have put education on the right track, should not have allowed this unfortunate Board to go into the limbo of oblivion and forgetfulness, for nation in Bengal means Muslims. Even if one or two Muslim members were in the majority on this Board, I wish the honourable member for the University of Calcutta, had shown generosity and let us, the majority in this province, go on doing as best as we could for the majority people of Bengal, because nationalism, Sir, according to the principles on which they acted in the Hindu provinces, must mean the rights of the majority. Looking at the question in a general way, the whole system of education has been poisoned and the Muslim in Bengal has been pushed to the wall everywhere and at every stage. I do not want to rake up the past, but wherever we go and whichever side we turn, we are denied the right even to educate ourselves and our children. To his grouse about members of the Senate not being present for long periods, I plead guilty. But, Sir, going and sitting in the Senate meetings is a heart-breaking experience for this reason that they come prepared, they come in a pack, and then you do not even get a hearing. Imagine 23 items being passed in 21 minutes! If the honourable member for the University wants me to give him my experience of the Senate meetings of Calcutta, I can give him details privately. On the very first day, Sir, he asked me, "Well, Mr. Siddiqi, how do you feel about it?" I told him, "I am thinking

whether I should resign tonight or wait till tomorrow morning." The meetings of the Senate are a farce. It has become the recording machine of the behests of the Syndicate. That is an experience which you will grant, Sir, is baffling.

The Muslims should have the right to say something about the education of their own children. I hope the Hon'ble Minister for Education will tell us why has the Bill turned into this fiasco? If the Advocate-General had declared that the Committee was not constituted rightly, then what is it today and how has it been brought into being once again? How has it been called back? Can the Advocate-General call a thing white today and the same thing black tomorrow? If the Committee could work, when did the Minister come to know of it? Why have months been allowed to go by without the Select Committee being called to consider it? The Bill, Sir, went through several stages and the one man who opposed it, and the one man who tried to crush it at every turn, was the honourable member for the University of Calcutta. We all understood why. In fact, I was one of those unfortunate people who occasionally lost his temper because of the surrender after surrender of the Chief Minister who was the Education Minister in the previous Cabinet. Sir, they grudge us even education. If the principle enunciated by the honourable member for the University of Calcutta is accepted and we hold that education should be controlled by the nation, then in Bengal we the majority must have a majority, not only on this Board, but in the University of Calcutta, and in the University of Dacca, which is also going to the dogs today because of the intrigues set on foot there. The demand we are making is not nonsensical. Given that we want to educate the Hindus and the Muslims, let us look at the history of the University of Calcutta, let us look at the history of secondary education, let us look at the history of primary education, and I ask the honourable member for the University of Calcutta to tell me what efforts have these great educationists, these great leaders of Bengal, made during the last 100 years to give education to the poor Muslims of Bengal. Whenever I apply for a post, I am told that I am unfit, that I am not educated; but when I demand education, I am told that I have not yet the right even to enter a college. Now, after the Act of 1935, Sir, if we want to show our faces in the Board of Secondary Education they say, "You are running away with a majority of seats." For goodness' sake let us have the majority, be generous, be kind, be large-hearted. If we send secondary education to perdition then alone will you have the right to take us to task. I hope the Education Minister and the Chief Minister will not act up to the promptings. Let us have a Board of Secondary Education. Let the whole world shout, but let the Muslims of Bengal have some say in the education of their children in the matter of secondary education. Do not grudge them this legitimate right of theirs.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, so many pointed references had been made to me by name in these debates, especially with regard to the criticisms of Government policy regarding the Secondary Education Bill,

that I deem it my duty to say a few words as to the past history of this very important piece of legislation and also the intentions of Government regarding the Secondary Education Bill.

Sir, the Saddler Commission recommended in no uncertain terms that one of the most crying needs of the province was the establishment of a Board of Secondary Education to control education at one of the most important stages, and the recommendation of the Saddler Commission led to the drafting of the Secondary Education Bill time after time till we reached the days of Provincial Autonomy when the last Secondary Education Bill was drafted. The first draft was in the year 1923, followed by a draft in 1925, followed by one in 1926, followed by one in 1929, and the last in 1937, when I had the privilege of holding the Education portfolio. When we made it clear to this House that it was the intention of Government to introduce a Bill, objections were raised on legal grounds that the Provincial Legislature had no jurisdiction to legislate regarding secondary education in Bengal. The reason was that the Calcutta University was functioning in two provinces and by an unfortunate oversight the schedule of subjects did not make it clear that legislation regarding secondary education would be within the scope of the jurisdiction of a Provincial Legislature. In order to set matters beyond doubt we approached the Government of India to either undertake this legislation as a Central subject or to move the Secretary of State for an amendment of the Schedule by an Act of Parliament enabling the Provincial Legislature to undertake this legislation. His Majesty's Government accepted the suggestion made by the Government of Bengal and it was in April, 1940, that the schedule of the Government of India Act was amended to confer jurisdiction on the Provincial Legislature to legislate for the Secondary Education Bill. Sir, in the year 1940, after we got the sanction of the amended schedule by the Parliament, I introduced a Bill in this House and moved a motion for reference to the Select Committee. As the House is well aware the Bill that I introduced met with strenuous opposition from the members of the Hindu community to such an extent that the Hindu members of the Select Committee in a body refused to serve on the Committee. Attempts were made to induce them to come and let us have the benefit of their advice, but they were adamant, and I felt that the best way to place this Bill on the statute book would be to have a sort of a consultation with the leaders of the various groups in order to evolve something like an agreed Bill. A Committee was appointed which held several sittings and towards the end of the year 1941 we did come to an agreement on almost all points except communal representation on the Council of the projected Education Board. The dispute arose regarding Scheduled Caste representation. As far as I remember it was proposed that the Board should consist of 52 members—26 Muslims and 26 Hindus. And the dispute was as to representation of Scheduled Castes, whether they would come within the 26 seats allotted to the Hindus or whether they should have three seats for themselves. Nothing was decided and, as the House is well aware, by the end of the year 1941 the old Cabinet went out of power and the new Cabinet came into existence. After this new Government was formed, we again

considered that point and our Hindu friends made a concession by agreeing to give up three seats from their quota of 26 and reserve them for the Scheduled Caste community. We thought that the dispute was at an end and the Select Committee might proceed with its business. After one or two sittings, an objection was raised by my friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the present Education Minister not being a member of this House, was not constitutionally eligible for Chairmanship or Presidentship of that Committee. This matter was referred to our legal advisers and we received conflicting opinions. The Advocate-General was consulted not on any other point but on this particular point whether the present Education Minister could *ex-officio* be a member of the Committee and could be elected Chairman of the Committee. The Advocate-General gave his answer unfavourable to the position taken up by Government and we decided that some means should be found to have meetings of the Select Committee concluded so that the Bill might be placed before the House during the autumn session. We thought that one way of solving the difficulty would be by inducing one of the members of the Committee to resign and allowing some one of the other Ministers belonging to this House to be a member, and that Minister being elected President, he might carry on the work of the Select Committee. Unfortunately, however, no member agreed to resign his seat and we were again in a fix. What we have done as a last resort is to summon a meeting of the Select Committee and let the Select Committee elect its own President. We propose, Sir, to let the Select Committee have its own way and we expect that since the principal matters in this Bill have already been satisfactorily settled by compromise, the Select Committee would not take long to finish its business. As soon as the Select Committee reports, it is our intention to bring the Bill to this House this very session. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: After the war.) I am saying this very session. It all depends on the quickness of the disposal of work in the Select Committee. My friend Mr. Israil has shouted "after the war". I know Mr. Israil has no confidence in me, otherwise he and I would not be sitting in opposite benches. Therefore, I do not expect Mr. Israil to accept my assurance that if the Select Committee finishes its labours within the first week or the second week of April even, we will place this Bill before the House.

Sir, it is no intention of ours to shelve the Bill. I may take the House into confidence and say without undue vanity that I spent one whole year assisted by Dr. Jenkins to draft that Bill. I had no less than a dozen drafts before me and I had to go through the mass of literature over this question of Secondary Education Bill and after having spent so much time and energy over it, I hope I can claim that I have got a soft corner in my heart for this Bill and that I would not allow this Bill to be smothered or killed or butchered or in any way done away with so as to be a betrayer of the interests of the Muslim community.

Sir, as regards the Secondary Education Bill, the position is——

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, may I put one question? My question is whether the Hon'ble Education Minister will be in that Committee,

because we find that according to the Government of India Act and other constitutional law, the Hon'ble Minister has no function in the Committee.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As far as I remember, Mr. Abdulla-al Mahmood is a member of the Select Committee. I remember having met him in the Select Committee. If he can so regulate matters as to elect a President and go on with the work of the Select Committee——

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, if the Hon'ble Education Minister be in the Committee——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not in the Select Committee. Therefore, it is no use asking me what will happen when the Minister of Education is there. What part he will play, it is for members of the Select Committee to decide.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I just suggest one thing? In view of the fact that the Select Committee has so far been denied the facility of getting the advice of the Hon'ble Chief Minister direct and in view of certain other developments explained just now, I believe the House would unanimously desire that the Chief Minister should be on the Select Committee, and it may then be possible for the Select Committee to elect a Chairman most easily without any controversy.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have said I could not get a seat and therefore I could not be elected.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, I am prepared to resign my seat in favour of the Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, my presence there is not necessary. Mr. Suhrawardy, you will be there a hundred times stronger than I may be.

Sir, I have very briefly put the case as clearly as possible. The delay has been due to causes and circumstances I have mentioned. The Select Committee has been summoned on the 26th. The Select Committee will sit and finish its labours, and I hope that time will be left for this Bill to be placed before this House: It will be—whatever my friends may say—a very contentious piece of legislation, and if the House is of the opinion that at the present moment, situated as we are, this legislation should be pushed through, it will be in their power to have the Bill placed on the statute book. Government will not place any restriction or any impediment in the way of the Bill being passed into law.

Now, Sir, there are one or two matters regarding Scheduled Caste education to which I wish to make a brief reference. We have made a permanent allotment of Rs. 1,50,000 a year for the advancement of Scheduled Caste education in Bengal. It will be a permanent grant, and it will be spent solely for the purpose of Scheduled Caste education and Government propose further to consider the advisability and the possibility of having an Inspector of Schools for Scheduled Caste Education.

Sir, as regards stipends and scholarships, there are certain grievances of the Scheduled Caste community which Government will take into consideration on the recommendation of the Committee.

Sir, I do not wish to say anything further. Only one word, Sir, as regards primary education. Sir, the position regarding primary education is this: except in the districts of Burdwan Division, in all other districts of Bengal there are District School Boards with the imposition of cess or District School Boards without the imposition of cess. Cess is being gradually imposed in the districts where District School Boards have been set up. As far as I remember, at the present moment there are 19 or 20 districts where District School Boards have been set up. In 15 districts cess has been imposed and primary schools are being set up there. The difficulty is about the financial aspect of the question. Roughly speaking, there are about a lakh of villages in Bengal and if the cost of a primary school is, say, Rs. 300 a year, it will cost Government about Rs. 3 crores, and the education cess comes to only Rs. 1,20,00,000. This financial difficulty is, however, being gradually overcome, and I hope I will be able to assure the House that so far the steps that have been taken have been towards the furtherance of the cause of primary education in Bengal. We have made the best possible effort to introduce primary education throughout the province, in spite of almost insuperable difficulties that have so far stood in our way, and we propose to continue our efforts till the whole of Bengal is dotted with a network of primary schools. I do not wish to say anything further on this point because the Minister in charge of Education will reply to the other points raised.

Sir, there is one more point to which I wish to refer: it is about the incidents that took place in the Pabna College. Briefly stated, the facts are these: Muslim students of the Pabna College wanted a room for the purpose of saying their prayers and the Principal allotted a small room for that purpose. But this was objected to by some students and the Principal withdrew his permission. He however permitted the Muslim students to say their prayers in the compound of the college, to which again objection was taken, and feelings ran very high. Sir, we have sent down to Pabna an officer for a local enquiry and report, and if possible, a satisfactory solution of the problem. We have sent down the Assistant Director of Public Instruction for Muhammadan Education, and he is already there.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: When did he go there?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am sorry, Sir. I am now told that he has not yet gone, but he will be going there very soon. Orders have been passed and he will be going there as early as possible, say, in the course of two or three days.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: May I ask one question, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. You will have your chance to put your question after the Hon'ble Minister finishes his speech, and I will not allow you to put any question just now.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have already said, orders have been passed and the officer will proceed to Pabna in two or three days, and I hope a satisfactory solution will be arrived at.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the room that was allotted to the Muslim students to say their prayers was later on kept under lock and key by the Principal or not; (2) whether when the Muslim boys were saying their prayers, the Hindu students held a demonstration there with musical instruments; and (3) whether the land or the place that was given by the Principal for the Muslim boys to say their prayers was being used by the Hindu students for their demonstrations with musical instruments?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Mahmood, while you were speaking on this particular subject, you did not raise any point about blocking or demonstrations.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: I submit, Sir, I did raise that point.

Mr. SPEAKER: However, you have asked the Hon'ble Minister these questions, and I have allowed you to put them, and it is now for the Hon'ble Minister to reply to these questions if he thinks desirable.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: May I put a question, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. If every one of you go on asking questions, there will be no end to these questions. I will only allow leaders of parties to put question in that case.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I said, the Assistant Director of Public Instruction for Muhammadan Education is going personally to look into all these matters and make a report. At the present moment I cannot make a statement one way or the other.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, is it open to the members of the Select Committee to elect the Hon'ble Education Minister as President?

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I know why the Select Committee was not convened six months ago for this obvious procedure of electing a President?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We were trying to induce some of our members to resign, but we could not succeed.

Maulana ABDUL AZIZ: I want to ask a question, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have ruled that only party leaders will be able to put questions in a matter like this.

Maulana ABDUL AZIZ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, মাদ্রাসা সম্বন্ধে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কোন জওয়াব দেন নাই।

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever other defects I may be heir to——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will you ask the Minister to come to the microphone, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur Sahib, kindly come up to the microphone.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever other defects I may be heir to, certainly I have never been a dreamer in life, nor have I suffered from that malady which doctors call Blood...(?)...I have never suffered from any hallucinations either like those honourable members who have crossed the floor and gone over to the other side as the Englishmen crossed over the Atlantic and went over to North America. These Leaguers may be suffering from that typical disease in an abnormal measure helped by the fact that they are what we may call a clustered block. They have dreamt a dream that Shakespeare called "a bottomless dream," because it has no bottom. They thought within themselves that the Secondary Education Bill would not see the light of the day in the Select Committee, but now they are disillusioned to find that it is being called to meet day after tomorrow——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: But the Advocate-General's opinion was taken six months ago!

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That is so, but I did not accept that opinion. I referred it back to the Advocate-General, but he did not change his opinion I was not even then satisfied with his opinion. Mr. Suhrawardy says that the opinion of the Advocate-General was obtained six months ago. That is so. I did not accept that opinion. I referred that back to the Advocate-General. He sent back his second opinion. I was not satisfied with that either. (Cries of "Oh!" "Oh!" from the Muslim League Opposition benches.) It is not for two rupee pleaders to say "Oh"! (Laughter from Coalition benches.) I had the matter discussed in the Central Assembly, Delhi, and the latest information came in January I thought of bringing up the matter before the House for the deletion of the rules under which Government might be placed in a comfortable position, because it was a matter of very great constitutional importance that no Minister of the Upper House can preside in a Select Committee of the Lower House or *vice versa*. That was a position which the Government were not prepared to tolerate. But I thought within myself, however, let me forego my right; still the Secondary Education Bill must be proceeded with and, therefore, I asked the Speaker of this House to extend the time up to the 31st March. The Secondary Education Bill Select Committee will resume their activities day after tomorrow. (Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: For one day.) I say they are suffering from hallucinations. My friends of the Opposition are all imagination compact that rules from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven——(Loud laughter and table thumpings from the Opposition benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I am thankful to Dr. Sanval and Mr. Suhrawardy for the great sympathy they have expressed for my teachers and my institutions. When I had the melancholy pleasure of being a Minister little did I dream at the time that my institutions will all be levelled down and my teachers will be reduced to abject poverty. As a matter of fact, so far as it lay in the power of the Government, it is well known to the people of Calcutta particularly and also to the people of the mufassal what great interest I have taken for the teachers, and with the help of the generous Finance Minister it was possible for me to take out of the treasury Rs. 2 lakhs within 15 days—a matter unprecedented in the history of Bengal treasury. (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: What about Chittagong, Noakhali and Feni?) I am coming to Chittagong. This is what the Government and the Ministry of Education have done.

A subvention of Rs. 1,68,000 has been paid to the teachers of non-Government schools in Calcutta. A sum of Rs. 7,000 was placed under the disposal of the Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division. A grant of Rs. 9 700 was made for secondary schools——

(At this stage the Hon'ble Chief Minister was seen talking to the Hon'ble Education Minister.)

Mr. AFTAB ALI: On a point of order, Sir. I have seen several times the Hon'ble Chief Minister interfering and asking the Hon'ble Education Minister to sit down. Is the Hon'ble Chief Minister in order to do that?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: As regards the affected areas outside Calcutta, schemes have been prepared and are being prepared under the direct supervision of Dr. Jenkins to give further relief to the poor and afflicted teachers.

As regards primary education, the matter has already been sufficiently explained by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. I wish to add only this: that Rs. 48 lakhs have been provided for primary education in Bengal this year—5 lakhs + 3 lakhs in addition to 40 lakhs.

As regards the Scheduled Caste education, well it is a matter of common knowledge how much the Government of the present day feel for the Scheduled Castes, because they realise the supreme importance of the principle that any backward community in the province is a clog in the wheel of administration, and if that clog has to be removed illiteracy has to be removed and all the communities should as far as possible be allowed to march *pari passu* towards the goal of advancement of education. In that view of the case the interests of the Scheduled Castes received our foremost consideration, and it is the duty of the Government to take them by its hands and to help them all in the onward march of progress. I need not dilate on this matter. I can tell you one thing: that for the Scheduled Castes we have allotted Rs. 72,000 for stipends whereas for the Caste Hindus we have

allotted Rs. 19,000 and for the Muslims Rs. 19,000 + Rs. 20,000 for scientific studies. So the Scheduled Castes will feel that as a matter of fact their interests are still uppermost in the heart and mind of the Ministry.

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: I have not heard a single word about Madrasah.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: মৌলানা সাহেব আপনি বলছেন, কিন্তু মাদ্রাসা সম্বন্ধে ব্যবস্থা করা হইয়াছে।

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: করা হয় নি, একেবারেই করা হয় নি।

The motion of Maulana Md. Abdul Aziz that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Jagat Chandra Mandal that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Mr. W. C. WORDSWORTH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with the permission of the House I would like to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. W. C. Wordsworth that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Hafizuddin Choudhuri that the demand of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim that a sum of Rs. 1,67,56,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "37—Education—General", was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-3 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 23rd March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble MR. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 194 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Bye-election of Union Boards within Natore subdivision.

***179. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether bye-election of—

(1) Brahmapur (Natore Thana),

(2) Kafura (Natore Thana),

(3) Majhgaon (Baraigram Thana), and

(4) Panka (Bagatipara Thana),

Union Boards within Natore subdivision have been held?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the elections were held and how long were they delayed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am sorry, I cannot give the answer offhand. The matter is entirely for the District Magistrate. I can only gather information and then give it to the honourable member.

Waiting room in Sessions Court building, Rangpur.

***180. Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department aware of the fact that there is no waiting room in the Sessions Court building in the district of Rangpur?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL and REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The matter will engage my attention. No complaint of inconvenience for want of a waiting room appears to have been made by any one.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any complaint was received regarding the want of any waiting room?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: If the honourable member would be good enough to look at reply (*b*), he will find that the answer is there.

Alleged irregular attendance at court by the Munsif of Jhenidah.

***181. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the only Munsif of Jhenidah attends the court at 12-30 p.m. on the working days and departs at 3-30?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of transferring him immediately in the interest of litigant public?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) No such complaint has been made to the District Judge. A complaint of this nature was received from certain members of the public and has been sent to the District Judge for enquiry and report.

(*b*) The appropriate action will be decided on receipt of the report from the District Judge.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when was this complaint sent to the District Judge for enquiry and report?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, I have not got the date here. But as soon as such complaints are received it is my practice to send them to the District Officials and no delay is made.

Amusement tax and cinema houses at Serampore.

***182. Khan Bahadur Maulvi AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of cinema houses that are at Serampore, in the Hooghly district; and

(*ii*) the amount that has been collected as amusement tax from those cinema houses for the current financial year?

(*b*) if no collection has been made, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) Two.

(*ii*) Nil.

(*b*) The provisions of the Bengal Amusements Tax Act, V of 1922, have not yet been extended to Hooghly district. The matter is under consideration of the Board of Revenue.

Temporary officers for collection of agricultural loans at Kishoreganj.

***183. Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of temporary loan-collecting officers appointed for the Kishoreganj subdivision this year; and

(*b*) what are their duties?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Five officers.

(*b*) Their duty is to collect agricultural loans.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that great distress prevails among the agriculturists of the subdivision due to abnormal rise in the prices of essential commodities including foodstuffs?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall certainly agree with my friend that distress prevails not only in that subdivision but also elsewhere owing to rise in the prices of essential commodities.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: In view of the fact that distress prevails, does the Hon'ble Minister think it desirable to postpone the collection of these agricultural loans till better days come?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have asked for a report from the Collector, and if the report recommends suspension then suitable action will be taken.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to expedite the matter because this is the worst time for the agriculturists in that area?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So I gather from some of my honourable friends elsewhere, and I believe yesterday a telegram was sent to the Collector asking for a report and his views. Action will be taken as soon as that report is made available to the Minister in charge of Revenue.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give an assurance to this House that he will be good enough to send similar telegrams to all the Collectors with a view to stopping the collection of agricultural loans?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is too far a general question, and I think it does not arise out of this question.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Of course it does not, but it is a matter of very great importance. So will the Hon'ble Minister please consider this question, because I have also got a similar case from Noakhali on which up till now no action has as yet been taken by Government?

(No reply.)

Distress in Manikganj subdivision.

*184. **Khan Bahadur AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that there is a great scarcity of rice and paddy due to failure of last *aman* crop in the Dacca district, specially in Manikganj subdivision;

(*ii*) that the agriculturists have no money to purchase seeds;

(*iii*) that the labourers have no work to engage themselves; and

(*iv*) that the people are on the verge of starvation?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the steps Government propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) The yield of the last *aman* crop was only half the normal.

(*ii*) The purchasing power of the agriculturists has been greatly reduced. But to meet the situation arrangements have been made to advance seeds to the agriculturists.

(*iii*) and (*iv*) The demand for labourers has fallen but there is still work for the greater portion of the labouring classes.

(*b*) Government have sanctioned an agricultural loan of Rs.50,000 as asked for by the Collector. More will be issued, if required.

Khan Bahadur AULAD HOSSAIN KHAN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what quantity of seeds was supplied to Manikganj?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is not a question for the Revenue Department but for the Agriculture Department.

Maulvi ABDUL LATIF BISWAS: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that cultivators are approaching the Collector and the authorities of Manikganj daily but they are not getting seeds?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall not be able to answer that question. My honourable friend may address that question to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any financial provision has been made by Government for the supply of seeds to agriculturists?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative.

A.R.P. Officer of Comilla.

***185. Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Civil Defence) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the name of the (1) present A.R.P. Officer and (2) previous A.R.P. Officer of Comilla; and

(*ii*) their qualifications?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the removal of the previous A.R.P. Officer?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (*i*) (1) Mr. A. R. Bannerjee and (2) Mr. A. Awwal.

(*ii*) Mr. Bannerjee was formerly the A.R.P. Depot Superintendent in Comilla. Prior to his appointment in the A.R.P. Service he was the Physical Instructor of the Comilla Victoria College. Mr. Awwal is a probationary Sub-Deputy Collector.

(*b*) Due to the shortage of Sub-Deputy Collectors for work in the general line.

Family allowance for security prisoner Babu Suresh Chandra Das Gupta.

***186. Mr. J. N. GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether it is a fact that Babu Suresh Chandra Das Gupta is detained in Bogra Jail as a security prisoner; and

(*ii*) whether Suresh Chandra Das Gupta or his wife has applied to the Government for the grant of a family allowance?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the family allowance has been sanctioned?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the amount of family allowance that has been granted?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Babu Suresh Chandra Das Gupta has a wife and two daughters. His wife has been granted an allowance of Rs. 50 per month.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when was Das Gupta's application received by the Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The allowance was sanctioned with effect from the 9th September, 1942, the date of his arrest. The actual petition itself is not here.

Grant of family allowances to certain security prisoners.

***187. Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether security prisoners Sj. Nalini Das Gupta, B.A., of Banaripara, and Ranjit Sarkar of Jausor in Pirojpur subdivision in the district of Bakarganj, now in Dacca Jail, have repeatedly applied for allowance to their families;

(*ii*) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister, when he visited the Dacca Central Jail, assured them of suitable allowances for their families;

(*iii*) whether at the time of arrest Sj. Nalini Das Gupta was earning more than Rs.75 per month?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of granting allowances for the families of these two security prisoners?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) There was no question of assurance except that I said I would do my best.

(*iii*) No, he was earning Rs.30 to Rs.40 per month.

(*b*) A family allowance of Rs.10 per month was granted to Babu Nalini Mohon Das Gupta with effect from the 1st January, 1942, which has since been increased to Rs.25 per month with effect from the 1st April, 1942. The case of Babu Ranjit Sarkar is still under my consideration.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Sj. Ranjit Sarkar is the only earning member of his family consisting of 7 heads?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Did not Sj. Ranjit Sarkar state this in his petition which he sent to Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got the petition here, but if this is a matter of any importance and the information is wanted, I will supply it.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Is it not a fact that for nearly one year he has been petitioning to the Government of Bengal for family allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say whether it is about a year, but I received three petitions—I remember it.

SJ. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: By what time can Sj. Ranjit Sarkar expect to have his family allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall try to expedite the matter.

Family allowance for security prisoner Sj. Panchanan Chakravarty.

***188. Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of petitions received from the 1st June to 9th August, 1942, and up to the 31st January, 1943, regarding—

(1) family allowance,

(2) leave on account of illness of near relatives and for the performance of *Sradh* ceremonies, and

(3) medical aid and treatment; and

(*ii*) the number of such petitions—

(1) rejected,

(2) granted, and

(3) that are under consideration?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact—

(*i*) that Sj. Panchanan Chakravarty, now a security prisoner lodged in Dum Dum Central Jail, applied for granting him a family allowance from the Alipore New Central Jail on the 16th July, 1942, and sent a reminder on the 2nd September, 1942; and

(*ii*) that his prayer for a family allowance was rejected by memo. No. 5156, dated the 19th September, 1942 [Home (Jails) Department], as his release was under consideration?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting him the allowance prayed for as he has not yet been released?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The information required is not readily available and its collection will entail an expenditure of time and labour which cannot be spared in the present emergency, but I shall be glad to supply information in individual cases if asked for after due notice.

(*b*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) His prayer for family allowance was rejected as the family was not deprived of any legitimate source of income by his detention.

(*c*) No.

Enquiry Committee regarding the Dacca Jail shooting incident.

*189. **Mr. M. FARHAD RAZA CHOWDHURY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what steps he has so far taken to implement the promise made on the floor of this House regarding the constitution of a Committee of Enquiry over the shooting inside the Dacca Jail?

(*b*) If no step has yet been taken, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for the delay in the appointment of the Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Immediately after the declaration was made by me on the floor of the House on behalf of Government, we decided that the Committee of Enquiry should be set up as early as possible and presided over by a High Court Judge, or some one holding the status of a High Court Judge. Such a President was not easily available, and we ultimately decided to approach Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji. He was willing to take up the work of enquiry after he had finished his professional engagements at Patna. Unfortunately, however, he fell ill and ultimately died and could not take up the work. Various other names are at present under consideration, and the final selection will of course be announced as soon as it is made. At the moment, however, it would hardly be suitable to mention these names, although it is hoped to secure the services of some one having the status of a High Court Judge.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any list of names for the membership of the proposed Enquiry Committee was submitted to His Excellency the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Committee could not so far be appointed because of the unsympathetic attitude of the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I submitted names and the names are before His Excellency the Governor for his consideration.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the names were submitted to His Excellency the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Nearly about two months ago.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that the names were submitted to His Excellency the Governor about two months ago——.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is an approximate period. It may be two months or less.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the latest time by which he feels he may be in a position to make an announcement?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So far as I am concerned, I have been reminding His Excellency the Governor for his approval, and that is all that I can do.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has received any communication from His Excellency the Governor on the appointment of the personnel of the Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got his approval.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the name of Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji was accepted by His Excellency the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The name of Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji was accepted as president, but the difficulty was about finding his suitable colleagues who could work with him and by the time we could settle anything, Sir Manmatha fell ill and ultimately died.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that there was no difference of opinion between His Excellency the Governor and the Ministry regarding the appointment of the Committee of Enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am afraid, I cannot answer that question.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister was pleased to say that the name of Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji was accepted by His Excellency the Governor as president of the Committee.

My question is whether it is a fact that the Governor accepted the policy of appointing or rather accepting the advice of the Ministry in the matter of appointing an Enquiry Committee for the Dacca Central Jail shooting affair.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The Governor has not refused to appoint a Committee.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji's name was accepted by His Excellency as the president of the Committee, are we not entitled to assume——.

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur, you cannot assume anything.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I want a statement of facts. Can we take it for granted that His Excellency the Governor accepted the principle of appointing a Committee of Enquiry?

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot take anything for granted. That is a question of inference. I disallow your question.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government approached a retired European High Court Judge requesting him to be on the Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not the Government but I approached him.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the question of appointment of a Committee of Enquiry is a matter within Ministerial responsibility or it is one within the individual judgment of the Governor?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow this question for it is a matter of opinion.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: I want to know, Sir, whether the Governor has to give his assent or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid you cannot argue in this way. If you ask for information on a point of fact that is one thing but if you say whether it comes within the individual responsibility or discretion of the Governor that is a matter of opinion.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why he has submitted the file regarding the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry to His Excellency the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not a question of fact but it is a matter of opinion as to why I did it. The reason why I did it I am not going to disclose.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this matter is one of Ministerial responsibility or one of discretion of the Governor?

Mr. SPEAKER: You are asking for an expression of opinion which I cannot allow you to do.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider whether the delay in holding an enquiry defeats the very purpose for which an enquiry is being held?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

Enquiry Committee for Dacca Special Jail incident.

***190. Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what action has been taken so far to give effect to the assurance given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on the floor of the Assembly on behalf of Government for the establishment of a Special Committee of Enquiry to investigate facts and to report upon the occurrences in the Dacca Special Jail on the 31st August, 1942, resulting in the loss of a number of lives due to firing?

(*b*) Has the proposed Committee been appointed, and if so, when and with what personnel?

(*c*) Has any departmental enquiry been made, and if so, what are the findings of such enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) Immediately after the declaration was made by me on the floor of the House on behalf of Government, we decided that the Committee of Enquiry should be set up as early as possible and presided over by a High Court Judge, or some one holding the status of a High Court Judge. Such a President was not easily available, and we ultimately decided to approach Sir Manmatha Nath Mukharji. He was willing to take up the work of enquiry after he had finished his professional engagements at Patna. Unfortunately, however, he fell ill and ultimately died and could not take up the work. Various other names are at present under consideration, and the final selection will of course be announced as soon as it is made. At the moment, however, it would hardly be suitable to mention these names, although it is hoped to secure the services of some one having the status of a High Court Judge.

(*c*) A joint enquiry by the Inspector-General of Prisons and the Commissioner of Dacca Division was held as soon as possible after the incident. Their findings were—

(*i*) that the mutiny among the security prisoners was the result of a preconceived and well-organised plan,

(*ii*) that the use of firearms was justified and not excessive.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in course of the joint enquiry it was revealed that these prisoners had already brought to the notice of the jail authorities their complaints regarding forced labour, want of equipments and clothings, and inadequate arrangement for food and water-supply?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The enquiry held by the Inspector-General of Prisons and the Commissioner of the Dacca Division was a sort of summary enquiry because they finished their investigation in the course of a couple of days. I do not know what evidence they collected, but so far as I am concerned I went there and held a personal enquiry and I was not quite satisfied with the findings of that enquiry.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Inspector-General of Prisons and the Divisional Commissioner in their report described the nature of the alleged mutiny?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, they gave a short account of what in their judgment amounted to a mutiny.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table a copy of this report submitted by the members of the Joint Enquiry Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If a full enquiry is held, this report will form part of the document to be submitted to that Tribunal, and in that view of the matter I do not wish to make it public.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Inspector-General of Prisons and the Divisional Commissioner found that the mutineers in question had any weapons in their possession?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to state why, if he was not satisfied with the report of the Inspector-General of Prisons and the Commissioner of the Dacca Division on the ground that it was a summary enquiry, he did not ask these two officials to make a further enquiry and to collect all the evidence?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am speaking from memory. The incident took place on the 31st August, 1942, and the Assembly was meeting some time on the 11th or 12th September. We wanted an enquiry immediately in order to be able to place facts before the Assembly in view of the fact that some adjournment motion had been tabled. By the time that they had submitted their report the matter came up before the Assembly, and it was discussed fully. We decided on hearing the debate that it would be much better to have an enquiry by a sort of Tribunal, and therefore we did not ask them to have any further enquiry.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the opinion expressed in the report regarding the shooting down of defenceless convicts who had climbed up on tops of trees?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I may mention that the enquiry was held in a rather summary way because we wanted a report quickly, and I do not think that they went into evidence of all the incidents. As far as I understand they have not referred—I am speaking from memory—to shooting people on branches of trees. I do not remember that. They did not go into details very much.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the appointment of the Committee of Enquiry is within the Ministerial responsibility?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I leave it to a constitutional lawyer like Mr. Suhrawardy to decide for himself instead of asking me.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am entitled today to ask the Hon'ble Minister and it is the Hon'ble Minister who has got to make a statement whether it is a fact or not. I do not ask for any opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, that is why I disallowed the previous question. I knew it.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Legislation regarding attendance of imprisoned members of the Assembly at meetings.

57. Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that arrangements were made in Burma for the attendance of its members in prison at the meetings of the House of Representatives; and

(*ii*) that the Committee of Privileges representing all the parties and groups in the House unanimously recommended the adoption of a convention to secure the attendance of the members of the Assembly, arrested, detained, convicted or imprisoned in this report which was placed before the House on the 19th September, 1940, pending the passage of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Powers and Privileges Bill, 1939, into law?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative and with reference to the reply given to starred question No. 67 on 29th September, 1942, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to bring in any legislation on the subject or to pass the Bill referred to in clause (*a*) (*ii*) into law during the current session of the Assembly?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) I have no information.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) and (*c*) No. It is not proposed to take up any contentious measure in the present Budget Session.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*c*) where it is stated that "It is not proposed to take up any contentious measure in the present Budget Session", may I enquire from which quarter the alleged contention regarding the Powers and Privileges Bill of this House is likely to come?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It may come from the honourable member himself.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the Powers and Privileges Bill was the outcome of a conference in which all parties were represented and general agreement was obtained?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I admit, Sir, it is more or less an agreed Bill and therefore the chance of contention has been reduced to a minimum. If there is time we will reconsider the matter.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister, will he be pleased to withdraw that answer describing the Bill as a contentious one?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not entirely agree, but there was a full discussion and the main principles were agreed to. That is what I say. It is not likely to be very contentious.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: In view of this answer, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when this Bill will be proceeded with?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So far as Ministers are concerned they cannot give any thought to these questions till the cut motions are over. After that if the honourable member puts the question I will be able to reply.

Present health of Sj. Nani Sen Gupta, a security prisoner.

58. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present condition of health of security prisoner Sj. Nani Sen Gupta; and

(*ii*) whether the aforesaid security prisoner was examined by the (1) Civil Surgeon of Midnapore, and (2) Medical Officer of the Hijli Special Jail?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether it is a fact that Sj. Nani Sen Gupta is suffering from pain in the stomach and paralysis of the legs; and

(*ii*) whether he was examined in the Medical College Hospital, Calcutta?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Formerly he used to complain of pain in the abdomen and weakness in legs but no such complaint has been made recently and he can now walk without having to use a stick.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) It appears from the reports as if it was a case of suspected appendicitis.

(*c*) (*i*) Please see my reply to (*a*) (*i*).

(*ii*) Yes.

(*d*) Nothing definitely wrong was found. It was regarded as a case of neurosis.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*) that it was reported that it was a case of suspected appendicitis, what is the present diagnosis of that patient?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: This answer is some time old. I will take it as a notice and if my learned friend will put a short-notice question tomorrow I will enquire and answer.

Held-over Questions.

(When held-over questions of the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur were called.)

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, will you kindly hold over these questions as Mr. Banerjee has taken over the portfolio only today and from tomorrow he will be able to answer?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that will be better.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: What is the matter with Nawab Bahadur?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Nawab Bahadur is no longer in charge of this portfolio. I understand the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee is now in charge of Food. He will supply us with food we all hope. Let us hope that he will before supplying us with food supply us at least with satisfactory answers to these questions.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Shall we take it as a definite censure on the Minister concerned?

Mr. SPEAKER: No censure can come from the Chair.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: May we know through you, Sir, when we can expect Mr. Banerjee to be ready?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think he ought to be ready tomorrow. These questions will come up tomorrow.

Adjournment Motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before you take up any other matter may I just mention about my adjournment motion which I handed over to you yesterday?

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you got the necessary consent? I have refused consent.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I am not moving it. I only want to make my position clear.

Mr. SPEAKER: The practice all along has been that when the Speaker refuses his consent to a matter, he generally asks the member who gives notice to see him in his Chamber. That practice I am following. I will look into the matter and consider, not in this session but in future, whether the whole thing should be discussed in the open House or not. I ask you to

see me in my Chamber and I will tell you what I have got to say, but so far as this matter is concerned, it relates to the food problem and therefore, I think, you can ventilate your grievances at the time of the discussion on "General Administration".

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I would like to say that what I wanted to bring to the notice of Government is the policy of control and decontrol.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know that. You are discussing the merits. Please see me in my Chamber today.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, what he wanted to bring to the notice of Government is that the price of rice has gone up to Rs. 40 per maund and the people are starving.

Mr. SPEAKER: He can discuss this on a cut motion. He can speak on this even today at the time of the discussion on "General Administration".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, there is one point arising out of the statement of Mr. Shahabuddin to which I would humbly draw your attention. This should be clarified. Mr. Shahabuddin has just mentioned that the price of rice has gone up to Rs. 40 a maund. Sir, that is not a fact. Such irresponsible statements are likely to create panic which it is the duty of every right-thinking citizen to prevent.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, Dr. Sanyal has no right to say that. I take full responsibility of Mr. Shahabuddin's statement. He thinks that he is more responsible than we are.

(Maulvi Ahmed Ali Mridha also rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order: don't quarrel.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, is it proper for one honourable member without verifying facts to refer to the statement of another honourable member who has got complete information and who is in touch with his constituency and to say that he is making an irresponsible statement?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is better always to use courteous language, but unless it comes within the purview of unparliamentary expressions, it becomes very difficult for me to say that that expression should not have been used. I do not know whether the expression "irresponsible" comes within the scope of unparliamentary language. I have not got adequate knowledge about these parliamentary and unparliamentary expressions. Let the matter be dropped here. There ought not to be further discussion on this point at this stage.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The word "irresponsible" is applicable only to Ministers and not to members. (Laughter.)

Admissibility of cut motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the demand for grant on "General Administration" is taken up I should like to draw the attention of the honourable members to the note at the top that these motions have not been admitted. Some of them in my opinion are not admissible. When they will be called up I will hear the member who wants to move it and then I will give my decision on that point.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

25—General Administration—General Administration.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,29,38,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration".

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. My intention is to raise a discussion on the failure of the Ministry to assume responsibility for the actions of the officers of Government.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, is the motion that has been moved admissible? I have moved that a sum be granted for carrying on the general administration. The cut motion has been moved in order to raise a discussion on the question whether Ministers have or have not failed to assume responsibility of something done by certain officers. I submit, that this cut motion is beyond the scope of the motion that I have moved.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, the demand that the Hon'ble Minister has made includes salaries, allowances, etc., of the Ministers. Now, if the Ministers have not behaved or have not been behaving properly as they should do under the constitution itself, certainly it is open to a member to raise that by way of a cut motion in the budget.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point appears to be this: that here is a demand for the salaries of officers. The officers have behaved in particular ways, and those ways may not be satisfactory, and the Ministers have also not assumed responsibility. The language is "assume responsibility for the actions of the officers". That is your point?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: No, Sir. It does not include only salaries of the officers, but salaries of the Ministers and travelling allowances of the Ministers as well. Therefore, if the Ministers' behaviour is not according to the constitutional law, I submit, that it must be open to a member——.

Mr. SPEAKER: You want to criticise the conduct of the Ministers?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, it is always open to you to do that.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir. I beg to submit that the statement made by the honourable member himself is a condemnation of the position he has taken up. The motion is to discuss the failure in general terms of the Ministry to assume responsibility of the officers of Government. It is so generally worded that it is impossible to reply. If the honourable member can draw the attention of the House to a specific act in which the Ministers have failed to take responsibility, that would be a proper motion, but in the form in which it has been moved, I submit, Sir, it is too wide to be allowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: After hearing both sides I think this cut motion is in order. (Applause from Muslim League Opposition Benches.)

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: On a point of order, Sir. Is it a general proposition or is it provided in any constitution that the Ministers will take responsibility for all the actions of the officers?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no doubt a relevant point. But these cut motions, as we are accustomed to receive them, are not drafts of Bills or Acts. These are general expressions used for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Hon'ble Ministers concerned or of the Government or of the House to specific acts which the Opposition may or may not approve. Therefore, I think that though it may or may not be happily worded, still I hold that this cut motion is in order.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: My point is clear, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, you have raised a constitutional point whether the Ministers are responsible for every act done by every officer. If an act done by an officer is not taken exception to by the Ministers—in fact Ministers are supposed to be responsible for the entire administration—if facts come to the notice of the Ministers for which the officers are responsible and if those acts are in the opinion of the House condemnable and if the Ministry does not condemn them, certainly the Ministers do assume responsibility and the Ministry deserves condemnation of the entire House. (Applause.)

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, I beg to submit further that there are actions of officers which fall within the Ministerial jurisdiction, but officers have also to carry out the orders of His Excellency the Governor which do not come within the jurisdiction of the Minister and the Minister cannot be held responsible for such actions of officers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly not. It is only common sense that where there is no power, there is no responsibility.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I quite see, Sir, the underlying reason why an objection has been raised to the legality of this motion. Therefore I would like at the very outset to give notice to the Government, though it is not necessary, that this is a motion of censure on the Ministry and must be taken as such.

The motion raises an issue of a momentous character. It charges the Ministry with having committed a grave constitutional delinquency. Before I deal with the many-sided evil effects of this crime I shall place a few facts before the House by way of establishing the charge. The psychological background of this criminal tendency as well as of the perpetration of the offence is provided by the unnatural political situation arising out of Bengal Ministry's adherence to office in spite of the fact that the Ministry does not agree with the Government of India in the latter's policy to combat the subversive movement started by rebel and unruly elements in the wake of the arrest of the Congress leaders in August last consequent upon their decision to launch a mass civil disobedience campaign to compel the British Government to accede to the Congress demand as embodied in the Working Committee resolution of August 8, 1942. The Bengal Ministry did not agree with the Government of India and yet pretended to carry out the latter's policy instead of boldly avowing their disagreement and gracefully stepping out of office. Just as one lie begets ten, this game of falsehood the Ministry has chosen to play with itself has been leading it to play similar games of falsehood right and left with all concerned. The first round started almost immediately after the sabotage movement commenced. I shall not make any but passing reference to the bold innings played by the star performer Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee as he has since relinquished his *de facto* captaincy of the team though as a member of a joint liability concern his acts equally bind the other members of the confederacy and give full support to the charge I have brought against the Ministry as a whole. Soon after Dr. Mookerjee's statement in a Press Conference held on the 2nd September last disapproving the policy of the Government of India and disclaiming the Bengal Ministry's responsibility for the arrests that were being made in Bengal, the Chief Minister and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca along with Dr. Mookerjee and other Hindu Mahasabha leaders were signatories to a document which contained the following statement: "The most influential political party in a mood of utter despair, finding no adequate response to this legitimate demand, wished to change their policy of non-embarrassment to achieve freedom. But before they could promulgate the same they were incarcerated and a policy of repression ensued." Holding of such views could only lead to their resignation from the Ministry. But such an honourable course being farthest from their thought they fell back upon the dangerous and preposterous alternative of disclaimer of responsibility for the actions of their officers. Accordingly when the Commissioner of Police had to take strong measures against acts of arson and sabotage and firing had to be resorted to, which we all regret, the Chief-*cum*-Home Minister disclaimed responsibility, pleaded ignorance and asked the Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party to collect from the public reports of persons killed and wounded in the firing, clearly indicating thereby that he placed no reliance on the reports furnished by the Commissioner of Police.

The second occasion for denial of responsibility arose when later on a Sub-Inspector of Police was brutally murdered at Bhanga in the district of Faridpur by the rebel elements there. Some vague counter-allegations of

police *zulum* were made by a section of the Ministry's adherents and immediately after that there was a Press report that certain progressive legislators were being sent by the Chief Minister to make an investigation about the alleged police execesses. Although the Chief Minister in a subsequent statement repudiated the correctness of the Press report, as the gentlemen mentioned in the report actually visited the locality it is for the House to judge what reliance can be placed on the disclaimer of the Chief Minister. It is clear that the Chief Minister was making a desperate effort to prove to the satisfaction of a section of his supporters that his Ministry was not responsible for what the police might have been doing.

A third instance is provided by the Chief Minister's prevarications on the floor of this House on the question whether he assumed responsibility for the arrest and detention of some prominent members of the Progressive Coalition Party, *viz.*, Messrs. Satyapriya Banerjee, Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal and Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee. He was in a nice fix. To own responsibility meant the loss of the valuable support of at least one wing of the Congress, if not of both. He therefore inclined towards the only other alternative of denying responsibility and took shelter under nauseating equivocations.

Yet a fourth instance is the Chief Minister's irresponsible announcement to make an enquiry into the alleged official *zulum* at Midnapore. He made a futile attempt to please both sides. He applauded the officers but absolutely threw them overboard when without satisfying himself that there was a *prima facie* case against them announced that an enquiry would be held into their conduct.

Sir, I have forgotten to mention that in the last session of the Assembly during the discussions over the distribution of A.R.P. appointments initiated by the Muslim League Parliamentary Party the Chief Minister openly declared that injustice was done to the Muslims but maintained that it was all due to the conduct of a particular high official and that the Ministry was not responsible for what had happened, although it was the Ministry that gave absolute discretion to the recruiting authorities to appoint men of their choice by modifying the service ratio rules by the addition of a proviso that the communal quota had to be observed only if efficient and sufficient candidates from the communities concerned were available. Here was a most shameless instance of denial of responsibility.

I may also refer to the grave charges levelled by Dr. Mookerjee in stating his reasons for resigning from the Ministry not only against the Governor but also against some permanent officials to the effect that in many important matters the Ministers were either not being taken into confidence or their advice was being systematically flouted. Dr. Mookerjee also disclosed that he had no difference with his colleagues and we find that even after his resignation he and his party have been giving full support to the Ministers. Now, Sir, as Dr. Mookerjee's allegations have not been contradicted or repudiated by the Ministry in spite of the Chief Minister's promise to make a statement on that, it follows that the Ministers are at one with Dr. Mookerjee in respect of these sweeping allegations. Sir, this is not all.

The climax was reached when the Chief Minister himself towards the close of the last month made a solemn statement on the floor of this House to the effect that the Ministers were as it were sandwitched between the Governor on the one hand and the permanent officials on the other and that they were more or less powerless puppets in many vital matters. However much the Hon'ble the Chief Minister may protest and prevaricate as he has occasionally done in the characteristic fashion all his own, a statement like the above cannot be swallowed even by his blind supporters as an avowal of responsibility for the actions of the permanent officials, whom he virtually charges with having been in a sort of conspiracy with the Governor to balk the Ministers. Sir, it is needless to multiply instances. I am sure there is not a shadow of doubt in the minds of the honourable members of this House that not only by his conduct but also by his utterances, innuendos and insinuations the Chief Minister has disclaimed responsibility for the actions of the permanent officials on diverse occasions.

Before I resume my seat I would like to impress upon the House what harm the Ministry has been perpetrating by this preposterous policy of denying responsibility. The mischief is threefold. Firstly, it cuts at the very root of responsible Government. Disowning of responsibility is the very negation of responsible Government. It is the Bengal Ministry which by its own conduct and not so much the Governor and the permanent officials as Dr. Mookerjee and the Chief Minister would have us believe that has reduced responsible Government to a farce in the province. If the tact, resourcefulness, moral stamina and regard for constitutional principles, if any, possessed by the Ministers failed to inspire the confidence and enlist the co-operation of the Governor on the one hand, and command the respect of the permanent officials on the other, the fault is certainly their own and in a contingency like this the only honourable course open to them was to quit office and not to grovel in ignominous subservience at one moment and indulge in empty bravado at another for the sake of their jobs and communicate the poison of their infected hands and diseased tongues to the unwary and unprotected body politic.

Secondly, a democratic constitution can only grow on right lines if those placed in charge of the administration at the formative stage have the sagacity, knack and statesmanship to create sound conventions and correct precedents. Our Ministers by creating conventions of the kind I have described have been doing irreparable harm to the infant constitution and I am afraid if this campaign of mischief is allowed to continue the last nail on the coffin of the baby will have been driven.

Thirdly, it is bound to undermine the morale of the services. Officials so long as they loyally and faithfully carry out the policy of the Ministry and do not transgress the bounds of propriety deserve every protection from the latter. If they lose that confidence in the Ministry which is the foundation of their loyalty—as they must have lost in Bengal on account of the Ministry's irresponsible behaviour and utterances—it amounts to a veritable death-blow to efficient administration. The harm already done is incalculable. If things continue like this for a little while longer the result will be an irretrievable administrative chaos.

Sir, one word more and I have done. The more you ponder over the light-hearted and irresponsible conduct and utterances of the Ministry the more you will be convinced of the enormity of their crime. They have proved false to the constitution, false to the province, false to those who naturally look up to them for support and last but not least false to generations unborn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I allow you, Dr. Sanyal, to move the cut motion standing in your name I should like to know something from you and something also from the Hon'ble the Home Minister so that I may decide whether this cut motion should be allowed or not. The cut motion deals with those cases in which the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers has been superseded or sought to be modified by the Governor in regard to matters entirely within Ministerial field or within the special responsibility of the Governor. Now, Dr. Sanyal, I owe it to a very great extent to you for the information that Lord Linlithgow made an announcement to the effect that the Governors will seek the advice of their Ministers not only with regard to matters strictly within the domain of Ministerial responsibility but also with regard to matters regarding the special responsibility of the Governor. But so far as matters within the Ministerial responsibility are concerned, the Ministers will be responsible to this Legislature but the Governor will not be responsible to this Legislature; but if the Minister in charge so desires he may make an open declaration to the House stating that he tendered certain advice which was not accepted by the Governor. Now, the position so far as that is concerned is quite clear——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Is that, Sir, with regard to matters which are within the Ministerial responsibility when a Minister has tendered a certain advice and the Governor has not accepted that advice?

Mr. SPEAKER: No; it is with regard to the special responsibility of the Governor.

Now the question that arises here in connection with this cut motion is this: at least the wording of this cut motion is such that if this motion is allowed and if it is put to vote and carried by the House, it means a censure on the Governor, pure and simple. Therefore, what is passing in my mind is this that though I can allow you to ask the Minister as to what advice he has tendered with reward to matters within the special responsibility of His Excellency the Governor you cannot bring it out in a cut motion and I cannot allow you to move it, because the effect of putting it to vote is to censure the Governor. I am putting it to you so that you may make the position clear and I want to know from you as to what you think to be the proper procedure.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I will not at this stage enter into the merits of the subjects that I propose to deal with by my cut motion. I am now only dealing with the points of order as have occurred to you,

Sir. As you have already ruled in connection with the previous motion the House and, in particular, the Opposition has, under the convention established by this House and by the previous Houses, the right to debate or to invite attention to certain specific questions of policy through token cut motions. Here, Sir, a very important question of policy is proposed to be raised, and in that connection I want to raise two issues. The first issue is, as has already been ascertained in the House from time to time through interpellations, whether the Ministers are prepared to give the House a list of the cases in which the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers has been superseded. Therefore, my first issue is that I would like to have further light on this question because the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has stated in the past that there may be two cases, ten cases or even 200 cases. He has simply admitted that there have been cases but he has refused to give me or the House the details regarding the number of cases or the specific cases themselves, so that my first objective is to elicit that information and failing that on the second issue I would like to censure the Ministers for having failed to give the House that information which I am entitled to have, because as I have read the announcement of His Excellency the Viceroy of the 21st June, 1937, which was read out to the House on the last occasion "If the Governor is unable to accept the advice of his Ministers, then the responsibility for his decision is his and his alone. In that event Ministers bear no responsibility for the decision and are entitled, if they so desire, publicly to state that they take no responsibility for that particular decision or even that they have advised the Governor in the opposite sense." So, I am only debarred from getting the information because of these words "if they so desire". Now, on the previous occasion, Sir, you or rather your predecessor ruled that there being these words "if they so desire" the availability of that information to the House depends on the desire of the Ministers and if they do not desire that I can only raise that issue by an appropriate motion. So, that is the only issue that I propose to take up today. So far as the Governor is concerned, the rules debar me from taking up any censure motion on the Governor. If I have to do that, I am well aware, Sir, that I will have to do it in a different form. I would like to have a recall motion on the Governor and pressed here if I could under the rules, but, Sir, that is a different issue and I cannot, I am aware, bring it within the purview of this motion. So that my objective is only two-fold: first, to seek to obtain the number of cases and the specific cases in which the Ministers' advice was superseded, and secondly, if the Ministers do not desire to give us that information, to censure the Ministers for having failed to do their duty by this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your position quite clear with regard to your intention, but the wording is not quite happy.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I believe it is, Sir, because I have said "cases in which the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers has been superseded or sought to be modified by the Governor".

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a discussion on the cases.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: And therefore I am raising the number of cases and the specific character of these cases and if the cases that I would like to put to the House through my motion are either accepted or if the Hon'ble Minister chooses not to reveal any information, then, Sir, my decision so far as going to vote is concerned will depend on those lines. The Governor does not come in except in a casual way as the factor concerned in these matters.

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the Hon'ble Chief Minister got anything to say?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have got nothing to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: In view of the explanation of this cut motion given by Dr. Sanyal I think this is in order and I admit it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you, Sir. I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about cases in which the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers has been superseded or sought to be modified by the Governor in regard to matters entirely within Ministerial field or within the special responsibility of the Governor.

Sir, after the explanation that I have just now submitted regarding the matters that I propose to deal with in connection with this motion, there remains hardly anything for me to state by way of further speech before this House. Sir, we have had occasion in the past to note that there have been actually certain number of cases in which the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers has not been given effect to by the head of the executive in this province. Why the head of the executive chose that course is entirely his concern. It might have been that in some cases he thought that it was in his individual judgment and not within the Ministerial field; it might have been that in some cases for reasons best known to himself he thought that as head of the executive he has some other responsibility to look to for which he could not act up to the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers. But, Sir, we feel that so far as the functioning of this Legislature is concerned, the Council of Ministers are bound to disclose information of this character to the House not only in their own interest but also in the wider public interest of the country.

Sir, we have noticed from time to time that the Hon'ble Ministers come to the House with assurances of various character which ultimately fizzle out. The assurances cannot be given effect to and we have suspected that in most of these cases the Ministers have decided one way but they have found that they were not in a position ultimately to carry out the assurances given. One such case was taken up only this morning, Sir, the case of the Dacca Jail Enquiry Committee. I suspect, and I have reasons to believe and from the answer that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has today given that suspicion has been more or less confirmed, that the cause for the delay in the appointment of that Enquiry Committee has

not been the indecision of the Ministers but the deliberate attempt by the head of the executive to stultify the attempts made by the Ministry to meet the public in their demand in the way that public men would do by appointing open Enquiry Committees.

The other day similarly we had a frank and open statement in the House by the Chief Minister in respect to demands from all sections of this House that an enquiry through a tribunal would be instituted regarding the excesses in the district of Midnapore and even with regard to that matter, Sir, up till now we have not heard what actually is going to be done by the head of the executive, and there also I suspect that the Council of Ministers have tried to do their duty but the head of the executive probably has not seen his way to accede to the demand made by them.

Thirdly, Sir, we had occasion to come in close contact with the preparation of a scheme for constituting Home Guards or Village Guards or "Gram Rakshidal" by the Council of Ministers seeking popular support from all parties, and particularly from all well-organised political associations and parties. We were also given by the Council of Ministers at that time to understand that the Home Guards scheme that ultimately was drawn up in consultation with members of the Opposition was accepted by the Council of Ministers and recommended to the head of the executive for giving effect to it. Sir, up till today nothing has been done in regard to that organisation of Home Guards with popular support. We are surprised that in a matter of such vital importance to the province of Bengal where the enemy has not only been near the door but has practically been seeking to enter our door there is no real attempt made as yet to organise village units for maintaining order and peace and security in the various parts of the province with popular support.

Fourthly, Sir, we have heard that there have been a number of detentions not merely of honourable members of this House but of responsible and reputed journalists and others against the advice of the Council of Ministers, and in particular mention was made of the names of Srijut Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, Srijut Satyapriya Banerjee and Srijut Suresh Chandra Mazumdar. In connection with these three detentions the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who is the Home Minister, virtually stated in terms and in gestures that he had ordered or advised the release of these estimable gentlemen, but, Sir, the executive thought otherwise. Sir, one of these three gentlemen, Srijut Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, is today lying in a hospital at Berhampore very seriously ill. He is suffering from high blood pressure and heart trouble and I had a letter from home only this morning stating that if he is detained any longer his life may be in danger, and yet, Sir, we find that in spite of the Chief Minister's and the Home Minister's definite attempt that such persons should not be kept under detention the head of the executive or his advisers have willed otherwise.

We have also found that in matters with regard to food situation the handling of the situation has been done in a manner which leaves no doubt whatever that the Council of Ministers were not always consulted or even

when they were consulted, that consultation was held in a most perfunctory way and all that was necessary to get the proper advice from the Council of Ministers was not arranged for.

In regard also to the collection or imposition of collective fines we have heard that the Council of Ministers' policy was not the same as the policy that is now being enforced throughout the province. I am not going to multiply cases as the blue light is already on. I only mention that we would like to make it perfectly clear that if there is any such continued attempt on the part of the Ministers to keep back information from this Houes, then they will fail in their public duty. I would invite attention in this connection once more to the announcement made by Lord Linlithgow on the 21st June, 1937, and since this question was discussed here last I have consulted many eminent lawyers and they are all unanimous in thinking that the Council of Ministers and even individual Ministers have not only the right but a duty to take the House into their confidence in the cases in which advice tendered by them was not accepted. This is in their own interest and in the public interest I once more repeat, and I demand that the Ministers do come forward with an open and frank statement of the position, so that we may know what to do and how to deal with the Governor of the province later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Motion No. 7 also stands in your name.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is nobody going to move any other motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: All right, Sir. I fully sympathise with the House that it would be an infliction on the members if I go on making speeches one after another on various issues although these are vital to the province and vital to us. But, as no other member is going to speak at this stage I have no other alternative.

I now beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this to raise a discussion on the policy regarding the imposition and realisation of collective fines.

Sir, in connection with a resolution moved by Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, the issue raised there was that collective fines should not be imposed except on proved participation of a particular set of inhabitants in regard to a particular matter which comes within the mischief of the Collective Fines Ordinance. I would like through this cut motion to know definitely the present policy of Government generally regarding the realisation of collective fines, because, Sir, we find various conflicting things happening.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: On a point of order, Sir. Already a substantially identical motion in the shape of a resolution is under discussion in this House—I refer to the resolution of Rai Harendra Nath

Chaudhuri. Dr. Sanyal spoke the other day on that resolution. I have heard his arguments and I am afraid that he will put forward the same arguments again today. I submit, Sir, that this motion is not in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you can go on; I have already given you an opportunity to speak.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I would invite your attention and the attention of my honourable friend Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas to the wording of the resolution of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri which is as follows: "This Assembly is of opinion that collective fines should not be imposed in those areas where the offenders have been or can be traced and where it has not been established by evidence that the inhabitants in general have been harbouring the alleged offenders." That is a very restricted thing and anticipating such ubiquitous attempts on the part of Government enthusiasts to raise points of order I have already tabled my cut motion in another form.

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not dilate on that point.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I find in regard to the imposition of collective fines, various different issues are raised which require clarification. The first issue about which I want the Hon'ble the Chief Minister who is now asleep (laughter) to let me know——

Mr. SPEAKER: That reminds me of a story, and I believe that is also a fact. A certain High Court Judge used to snore when arguments were advanced on behalf of the parties, but at the time of delivery of the judgment he not only dealt with all the points raised but added new points and answered new points. Perhaps you can except that also from the Chief Minister. (Renewed laughter.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to collective fines, I would like clarification of the Government policy on the following points in particular. The first thing that I want to know is: what is the policy that Government would like to adopt in regard to the imposition of collective fines if it is proved that the inhabitants as a whole of an area have nothing to do with a particular act which is considered to be an act coming within the mischief of the Collective Fines Ordinance. We have occasionally found that collective fines have been imposed for alleged acts which have nothing to do with the sabotage movement or with anything that may be considered to be of a political character.

The second thing on which I want a clarification is this. Supposing that at a particular place a number of persons are actually hauled up for an offence and the offenders are found out and punished, should there be a further collective fine in that area subsequently? If the offenders are brought to court and punished what is the necessity of collective fines on the entire set of individuals or inhabitants of those areas? That is another issue. This has taken place at Beldanga and is likely to take place in another much talked of place, namely, Balurghat.

The third issue on which I want clarification is that after the delegation of the power to levy collective fines to local officials, these officials are in a number of cases not proceeding by imposing collective fines in the whole area and then exempting some, but they are only selecting some individuals for the fine without issuing notices on the others. This is the third and the most important issue and I want to know whether the local officials have been given necessary directions as regards Government policy, because we notice that in some cases, as in the case of Jiaganj-Ajimganj and in the case of Beldanga, collective fines have been imposed for the second time without notification for the whole area and the levy has been through the selection of a few individuals who have been subjected to the Collective Fines Ordinance.

Now, Sir, comes another issue, namely, that in the process of realisation of collective fines it has been stated that the Public Demands Recovery Act procedure will be adopted, but the procedure that is now being adopted, as was revealed in the case of Mr. Anil Kumar Chanda of Bolpur, is that the thana officer straightaway went with a number of armed constables, pulled out his furniture, took away the furniture to the thana and sold them. The Public Demands Recovery Act lays down certain procedure. At first the Certificate Officer has to issue notices on the persons who have to pay certain dues to Government. Time is then allowed for hearing any objection to those notices and also some time is allowed for paying up dues and there is scope for an appeal or some motion with regard to the same in certain cases. But, Sir, we have found in a number of cases that nothing like that is being done. Persons are asked to go to a particular dâk bungalow or a particular place given notice of by the officer concerned and they are asked to pay there certain amounts which are assessed. This is highly objectionable.

Sir, the fourth thing on which we want to have clarification is that when a collective fine is imposed on an area as a whole and certain persons are exempted from payment, is it the policy of Government that the amount also gets exempted after the assessment is once made or the amount so exempted does come back on those unfortunate persons who are left over for the levy and the assessment of those persons goes on increasing and increasing as and when some other persons get exempted. It has happened, Sir, in the case of Beldanga that although certain persons were exempted at a later stage, the amounts so exempted were allowed to fall on the shoulders of persons left over to pay up the imposition. This is a fact which has taken place and, Sir, it is not my intention today to deal with the justice or otherwise, the fairness or unfairness of the imposition as a whole. There is this Ordinance, but in the application of that Ordinance various abuses are being noticed and these abuses sometime fail to create that impression for which probably the Collective Fines Ordinance was introduced.

Sir, I submit that it is not and it should not be Government's policy to terrorise the people as a whole of a particular place for the fault, even admittedly, of a few. Again, Sir, it should not be permissible for the local

officers to use this engine of oppression to do certain things that they are not expected under the law to carry on and in so doing, I submit, the Government of the day is being put to hatred of the public and those who are responsible for such imposition of collective fines and realisation of fines are really acting as agents of a foreign power creating disaffection in this country. It is they who are really the fifth columnists because one can well realise that in these hard days if a large mass of people are made to suffer for no fault of theirs, they would not easily sing hallelujah to the existing order of things.

Sir, the last but not the least point that I want to emphasize is that I have got a list of persons who have been subjected to collective fines but who do not get even two square meals a day. They are day labourers and some of them are cobblers and members of Scheduled Castes who have hardly any earning, and even they have been subjected to collective fines. They have no property, no income and yet just because they have been inhabitants of a particular place, they have been subjected to collective fines. This policy ought to be revised. I submit that the Hon'ble Minister will please give us a complete and correct picture of the Government's policy in regard particularly to the points raised.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, the next motion is also yours. I find you have got a lot of motions. You have taken a pretty long time in moving your previous two motions. So, please try to be brief and try to finish in one or two minutes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If there is nobody else to move now, I may move my motion. But I think the prayer time is up.

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion to raise a discussion on the action of Government in prohibiting the publication of Muslim League Enquiry Committee's report on the Kishoreganj firing.

Sir, on the 19th October, 1942, a most unpleasant and tragic occurrence took place at a mosque in the town of Kishoreganj, a subdivisional headquarters of the Mymensingh district. In the year 1941 there was a dispute at this particlar place over the passage of a procession with music before the mosque and as a result of the negotiation and conciliation it was agreed between the two sister communities that no procession with music would pass by the mosque. Last year in 1942 again attempts were made to take out a procession with music when the Muslims raised their voice of protest. The Subdivisional Officer heard both sides and decided not to issue the necessary permit for the procession to pass. But a certain Hindu Government official who was the sponsor of the movements approached the

District Magistrate who wired to the Subdivisional Officer sanctioning the issue of permit. This was in violation of an agreement mutually agreed upon by the two communities. The District Magistrate thus sowed the seed of the trouble that was unfortunately to come. On the day of the occurrence the procession with music attempted to pass by the mosque which wounded the religious feelings of the Muslims. Though the Muslims attempted to persuade their Hindu brethren not to be insistent on their intention of showing disrespect to their feelings, the Hindus remained adamant. At this the police intervened and tried to disperse the Muslims. This naturally led to a passage of words and then suddenly without any warning the police opened fire on innocent Muslims who were in the compound of the mosque. What is shocking is that even persons who were in the verandah of the mosque were shot at and wounded, and an honourable member of this House very narrowly escaped death. The report of this outrage created bitter feelings in the minds of the Muslims of this province, and as usual Mr. Fazlul Huq very kindly promised to institute a proper enquiry. Nothing materialised apart from a departmental enquiry which from the very nature of its composition is bound to be in favour of the Government officials. The Muslim League also formed a committee to enquire into the incident. It consisted of responsible men well known in public life. The committee visited the scene of occurrence and interested men of the locality, and interviewed them for the purpose of making a report. A part of the report was published in certain newspapers but before it could be completed Government banned publication of the same. This action of Government has not only been an encroachment upon the freedom and liberty of the people but has given dissatisfaction to the Muslim community. Besides there is no justification for such action unless Government think that the report exposes the excesses committed by the police and other high officials. It is a sad commentary of the administration of the Ministry where all legitimate criticisms are banned and the exposure of the sins of omission and commission on the part of Government officials prevented by the brute force of governmental power. Like the State of Denmark every thing seems to be rotten in the policy and administration of the present Government and the sooner it is put a stop to the better it is for the freedom-loving people of Bengal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Israil, you have got two motions standing in your name, Nos. 15 and 16, one of which is analogous to the motion just now moved by Nawabzada K. Nasarullah. If you want you can move both the motions but you will please make one speech on both, and not try to repeat what has already been stated by Nawabzada Nasarullah.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I will move both the motions and make one speech. But, Sir, I want some more time because Nawabzada Nasarullah is not fully aware of all the facts of the case, and has not disclosed many important points relating to the shooting affair.

Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion to raise a discussion on the arbitrary order of the District Magistrate, Mymensingh, Mr. S. Banerjee, I.C.S., for a procession with music before the Puran Thana Mosque at Kishoreganj disregarding an agreement to the contrary.

Sir, I also beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about the firing upon peaceful and unarmed Muslims within the Puran Thana Mosque at Kishoreganj on the 19th October, 1942, by the order of the local officials.

Sir, before I begin my speech I want to give a short history of the incident that took place at Kishoreganj. There is a time-honoured custom in Kishoreganj that music of all kinds are stopped before mosques. In all the licences granted up till now at Kishoreganj for taking out processions with music the condition of stopping music before mosques is uniformly and invariably present as has been found on examination of the copies of these licences before Mr. Kshitish Chandra Barman, the licensee of this year, and other representative and respectable Hindu and Muslim leaders in the presence of the Subdivisional Officer and the Circle Inspector of Police. On the 19th October, 1942, at 10 a.m., some hours before the unfortunate occurrence took place, copies of the licences were produced on the insistent demand of Babu Kshitish Chandra Barman by the Circle Inspector of Police. Babu Kshitish Chandra Barman, previously a Sub-Deputy Collector now promoted to the rank of a Deputy Magistrate, at present posted at Dinajpur as a Special Officer of Santhals, erected a new *pucca* house to the east of the Puran Thana Mosque some 3 years back. His new house is bordering on the river Narsinda, and he began Durga Puja probably on his promotion first in the year 1940. Babu S. C. Barman's house, another licensee of this year, is also quite close to the Narsunda river on the south, and his images were many a time immersed in the Narsunda river and images of many others were also similarly immersed in the Narsunda river. Lately the Hindus of the town abandoned the practice of immersing their images in the Narsunda river but all the images are collected near a big tank at Rathkhola and immersed there.

In 1941 Babu Kshitish Chandra Barman, Deputy Magistrate, and Babu Sudhir Chandra Barman, B.L., got two licences for immersion procession wherein it was clearly laid down that music must be stopped before the mosque. Babu Sudhir Chandra Barman passed his procession before the mosque without music while Babu K. C. Barman, being a Government servant, passed the procession with music in contravention of the express condition of the licence and even at the protest of the local Muslims. The Muslims who were very much agitated were pacified and they were advised to approach the local authorities for redress, instead of having recourse to violence. Accordingly petitions were filed before the Subdivisional Officer Mr. S. Sen, I.C.S., and the Subdivisional Police Officer Mr. Sadulla, I.P., and Kshitish Babu expressed his deep regret for the playing of music before

the mosque which according to him was wholly unintentional and undertook not to renew it in future, and he also apologised before the local Muslims in front of the mosque.

Here I want to show the agreement that he made before the Subdivisional Officer. I want to read the relevant portion of it. "In enclosing herewith a petition I am to request you"—the petition has been sent to me—"to inform the petitioner that the matter has been investigated into by the Subdivisional Officer and discussed between him and the gentlemen of both communities. The act was unintentional and if any offence was given however unknowingly and unintentionally, the gentleman concerned regretted it and it was also decided to see that no such occurrence takes place in future." This is the letter addressed to me in reply to a petition that was submitted by the local Muslims to the then Subdivisional Officer, Mr. S. Sen, I.C.S.

Sir, Khitish Babu on a permission for leaving the station, arrived at Kishoreganj during the Pujas in 1942. He applied for a licence for procession with music before the present Subdivisional Officer. The Subdivisional Officer on getting police report granted him a licence without music before mosque on 15th October, 1942. Khitish Babu wrote a private letter to the Subdivisional Officer on 18th October, 1942, demanding a licence with non-stop music as the stoppage of music at any time would wound the feeling of the Hindus. The Muslim leaders referred to his agreement last year and the custom and the letters of the Subdivisional Officer and Subdivisional Police Officer referring to his agreement were produced before the Subdivisional Officer in his presence and other local Hindu and Muslim leaders. On this the Subdivisional Officer decided to stick to his decision—that was at 1 p.m. on 19th October, 1943, that is, the day of occurrence. Khitish Babu's men wired to Mr. S. Banerjee, I.C.S., the then District Magistrate, for allowing them to take procession with music. The District Magistrate wired to the Subdivisional Officer asking him to allow procession with music before mosque outside prayers. Here I may inform the members of the House that there is no intervening time between two compulsory prayer hours. On this the Subdivisional Officer wired to the District Magistrate soliciting instruction in view of the previous agreement to the contrary and myself and Shah Abdul Hamid, a member of this House, sent similar wires to him requesting him to reconsider his decision in view of previous agreement on the matter. Our wire was never attended to and the Subdivisional Officer was asked by another wire to execute his previous order without further reference and questioning because there was sufficient police force at Kishoreganj. The Subdivisional Officer then ordered for the passage of the procession and fixed 8-30 p.m. on the 19th October as the time for the passing of the procession before the mosque.

In view of the circumstances narrated above the members of this House will probably agree with me that the Muslims had no time or reason for making any pre-concerted attempts for obstructing the processionists. The procession started from the house of the two licensees already mentioned and on the approach of the processions towards the mosque the local Muslims

began to collect in the lawn of the Islamia Hostel compound before the mosque and their number did not exceed four to five hundred. All the Muslims assembled were entreating the processionists and the licensees to stop music before the mosque—the processions were passing by a district board road and the Muslims were standing in the hostel lawn intercepted by a municipal drain—from the district board road, and the police forces with *lathis* were between the processionists and the Muslims. As the Muslims wanted to make entreaties to the processionists, they were beaten back by a severe *lathi* charge and almost all of them had to take shelter in the mosque and nearabout the minaret and after this *lathi* charge it is reported that there were some brick-bats thrown on the police—though there has not been the slightest injury to any of the police or other officials and the processionists and not a single injury could be shown to the District Magistrate, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, the Superintendent of Police and Additional Superintendent of Police, who arrived at the spot at 11 a.m. on 20th October, 1942, that is, on the day following. Immediately after this *lathi* charge fire was opened on the Muslims inside the mosque on the order of the Subdivisional Officer resulting in two instantaneous deaths within the mosque and two expired in hospital within two or three hours, and fifteen injured within the mosque and the mosque and the minaret have been mutilated in many places by bullet marks. There were 19 shots fired in all. The officials took no steps in removing these dead and injured to the hospital and we had to do everything in that connection.

Wires were sent to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, the Premier, Mr. Suhrawardy, Sir Nazimuddin, the Orient Press, the *Azad*, the *Morning News* and other Muslim leaders, but all these wires were withheld on the instructions of the local officials by the postal authorities and these items of news were not allowed to be published in any newspaper unless they were approved by the Subdivisional Officer, the local Press Adviser who for his own interest did not want the publication of any news and hence did not approve of any of these news. The accused in this way was given the task of a judge. Wires were sent to the Premier and to all the Muslim Ministers by Khan Sahib Nurul Amin and Muhammad Abdul Monem Khan apprising them of these unfortunate incidents. Maulvi Shamsul Huda, M.L.A., belonging to the Coalition Party, also sent a similar wire to the Premier. The Premier in a letter to Maulvi Shah A. Hamid, M.L.A., promised an immediate enquiry by the Commissioner of the Dacca Division and subsequently by a non-official body, but neither of these was fulfilled. The letter of the Chief Minister was addressed to Shah Abdul Hamid, a member of the Coalition Party, who belonged to Kishoreganj and in whose constituency the unfortunate incident took place. The letter is dated the 24th November, 1942. It runs thus: "I have received a statement of fact from Maulvi Abdul Monem Khan which has helped me a good deal in appreciating the Muslim point of view and which has also been ably put forward by you. I have my suspicion that the whole thing had been due to the bungling of some officials whom I

need not mention. I have already asked the Chief Secretary to write to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division to proceed at once to Kishoreganj to enquire into the relevant facts. Meanwhile we are awaiting the full report from the District Magistrate. Before we can decide upon a non-official enquiry we must have the statement of facts by the District Magistrate as also by the Commissioner of the Division. This has always been the practice, as you know, and I think it is a sound practice also, that if the report of the local officials show that there were other facts to be investigated, a case would certainly be made out for a non-official enquiry but we cannot order a non-official enquiry at once before the local version is heard. In this case you will have to focus your attention on the following points—whether there was any settlement between the Muslims and the Hindus over this very question last year, etc." Then he goes on to say: "I need hardly say that my feelings in this matter are no less acute than any of my Muslim friends in spite of the fact that I am represented as being almost a convert to the Hindu Mahasabha. My friends and enemies may well recollect all these things." Lastly he says: "There is another point of enquiry which is also important, viz., whether it is a fact that the District Magistrate was apprised of the fact that there was a settlement last year which practically put an end to the controversy".

Now, Sir, this was the letter signed by the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq and handed over to Mr. A. H. Hamid, M.L.A., of Kishoreganj. But this House will be amazed to hear that we—myself and Mr. Abdul Hamid Shah—met the Commissioner, Dacca Division, in the dâk bungalow on the 29th October and by the way I enquired whether he was going to make an enquiry. He said: "I have not been asked to hold an enquiry. I have just been asked to come and mix up with the local people and have their views of the occurrence." Just now the Chief Minister says one thing at one time and another thing in the next moment. That is by the way.

Now the Chief Minister himself went to Kishoreganj on 30th November, 1942, visited the mosque and saw the bullet marks on the mosque and the minaret adjacent thereto; and though he was pressed by the people to let them know what steps he was taking to give them redress he did not open his mouth and I myself placed before him the demands of the local Muslims in this connection in writing and handed them over to him. In the presence of local leading Muslims he promised redress, but nothing has been done up till now. The Muslim League Enquiry Committee presided over by no less a person than Sir Nazimuddin made a detailed enquiry in the matter and submitted a report, but it was not allowed to be published in the press on the alleged plea of *sub judice* and the Chief Minister's statement also in the Council about this incident was not allowed to be published in the press. Then a case was started against the injured under sections 143 and 148 and charge-sheet submitted, which however had to be withdrawn by Government on 22nd January, 1943, *i.e.*, one day before the Muslim League Conference at Kishoreganj, as there was no substance in the case. A sanction under section 197, Cr. P. C., had been asked for for prosecuting the delinquent officers but up till now Government has not

given the necessary sanction. The Chief Minister, in answer to a question of mine, the other day said that he was awaiting reply of his law officers. I do not know whether he has by this time got the reply of his law officers. Sir, in this case, even the little finger of Government has not been moved against the officer who was responsible for this unhappy incident. I want a categorical reply from the Hon'ble Minister about the sanction and about the compensation to be paid to the mosque for its mutilation and to the heirs of the killed and also to the injured.

Here I want to bring only one point to the notice of the House. This is a certified copy of the information lodged by the Subdivisional Officer Khan Sahib Saadat Husain Chaudhuri for the case under sections 143 and 148. In that he also admits that though there were some brickbats according to him he goes on to say "I was also hit with brickbats on the head, but I was not injured." This also shows that there was no injury to the processionists and other people and the firing was wholly unjustified and Government is sitting tight on the matter. They did not take any action against the officers and did not even allow us to take any action against these officers by prosecuting them according to law. We have already given notice of prosecution and I have brought a copy of the prosecution notice. So, I hope that the Hon'ble Chief Minister will in reply make a statement of the policy and tell us whether he will give compensation to the mosque and also to the heirs of the killed and the injured people themselves and also whether he will give the sanction necessary for this purpose.

With these words, Sir, I move my cut motions for the acceptance of the House.

(Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal rose to speak and there were murmurs from the European benches.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I appreciate the applause or murmur from the European Group when I rise to move my third important cut motion this evening. I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of this motion is to raise a discussion on the failure to give effect to the scheme for reorganisation of the "Home Guards" for the rural areas in Bengal, so as to make the same representative of popular organisations and parties.

Sir, the House has already learnt that there was a scheme for Home Guards formulated by the Council of Ministers in consultation with public organisations and political parties, which scheme has unfortunately not been given effect to by the head of the executive so far. I submit, Sir, that in so refusing to act up to the advice of the Council of Ministers a serious situation has been created in the country. And, Sir, at a time when a relentless enemy is not only at our doors but is seeking to enter the sacred province of Bengal it is nothing short of callous and criminal negligence. I submit, Sir, that as early as April last year when the denial policy was first adumbrated the head of the executive sent for a few representative

party leaders to have a discussion with them regarding various issues that may be confronted with. One of the issues was how to maintain peace and tranquillity in the province in the difficult situation that was likely to happen.

Sir, in that connection, we of the Congress party made it quite clear that if it falls to our lot to protect our hearth and home the Congress party will not shirk their responsibility as free men and will undertake any amount of privations and sufferings to provide adequate protection to our villages and to others. Sir, three months elapsed thereafter, but nothing definite was done and in the meantime certain usual methods were adopted to nominate a few persons of questionable political influence to organise the village guards. The civic guards were organised in cities and the term "Home Guards" was given to village guards or গ্রাম রক্ষীদল, as the Chief Minister thought is necessary to style them. We felt that it was a very wrong approach by the Government and some of us, not merely on the invitation of Government but also because we felt the necessity and urgency of securing proper protection to our villages, volunteered our advice to some of the Hon'ble Ministers concerned, and a result thereof some of the Ministers had prolonged consultation not only with the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party here but also with the President of the Indian National Congress Maulana Abul Kalam Azad himself. And although the Congress had great hesitation as an all-India organisation in coming into the picture in which the Congress might be involved in the so-called war effort of this province, yet, Sir, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his wisdom thought that, in view of the very special circumstances of Bengal, Congressmen in Bengal ought to take the responsibility for providing adequate protection to the villages of Bengal in this difficult hour.

After that, Sir, series of consultations were held and schemes were drawn up, the general outline of which was that the Minister for Civil Defence should be ultimately the responsible head, the responsible person in the Cabinet, to take charge of the Department of Home Guards, associated with whom should be a Council of Advisors composed of persons taken from the major political parties in this province. It was decided at that time that major political parties would come and sink their political differences so far as this problem was concerned and wholeheartedly co-operate in this supreme task. It was stated in that scheme, Sir, that corresponding to the Central Council of Advisors there would be local Advisory Committees whose powers should be defined to extend very largely to the whole field of civil defence including the normal work of Village Guards. It was thus proposed that every district should have local committees composed of non-officials—composed not of non-officials casually selected but representatives of various influential political parties in the areas, and corresponding to that again in the subdivisions and union boards similar committees should be composed. It was laid down in that scheme that the selection of personnel of the volunteers, the volunteers' captains and adjutants should be on the recommendation of such Council of Advisors proposed in the respective

areas. We were given to understand that the scheme was going to be adopted and certain appointments were also made. It was agreed, Sir, that so far as the responsibility for maintaining law and order in this province was concerned, the police work would not be interfered with. We were prepared to admit that for any emergency the Home Guards in the rural areas would work in direct co-operation with the local Thana Officer or the official head whoever he may be. And in spite of the fact that we went a very long way to concede that everything possible should be done in the difficult circumstances of this province to enlist public co-operation fully under an organisation that would evoke public sympathy and support, nothing was done and nothing was allowed to be done for motives which it is very difficult for us to understand.

Sir, I seek to raise a discussion on this issue because I feel that even now it is not too late to mend and I feel that the powers that be would yet find out their folly and the Hon'ble Ministers would be in a position to assert themselves in the organisation of a suitable Home Guard for the rural areas of this province enlisting the sympathy of all parties including the Congress, the Muslim League, the Progressive Coalitionists, the Europeans if they would like to help, and the Scheduled Castes.

With these words, Sir, I move my motion.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Adiministration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on the manner in which the Collector of Bankura made use of the Defence of India Rules to persecute certain members of the Bankura District Board including a member of this House in connection with the District Board's Chairman's removal affair; and the desirability on the part of the Government to take adequate notice of the Collector's conduct.

Sir, this is a case of typical highhandedness of the District Officers in the countryside. Sir, you will be surprised to hear that this is just like a tempest in a tea-pot. The District Officer, Mr. F. Abdul Karim, a member of the Indian Civil Service, showed his overzealousness in the matter of Mr. Siddique, the Chairman of the District Board against whom notice of no-confidence and removal from office was tabled. Sir, we could have understood the District Magistrate if he had taken any legitimate interest in the affairs of the District Board, but he made it a personal matter and there was no point whatsoever why the District Magistrate should be so overzealous in respect of a chairman who had continually been showing neglect of duty. Now, the members of the District Board tabled a motion of no-confidence in the Chairman and the District Magistrate asked the Subdivisional Officer to go from door to door to persuade the members not to vote against this gentleman. When persuasion failed, he showed threats, as is the general practice with these District Magistrates in the countryside where they are all in all. Threats failing, he ordered the arrest of four

persons of the District Board, and one of them, Mr. Manindra Bhusan Sinha, is a member of this House and was the Chairman of the District Board for a long time. Along with this gentleman, three other gentlemen, namely, Mr. Benoy Kumar Roy, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Narendra Krishna Bose and Mr. Phani Bhusan Chatterjee, were arrested on the 26th October. Barring the Vice-Chairman, they were all sent to Midnapore for detention under the all-embracing and all-pervading Defence of India Rules. The Defence of India Rules are not certainly to be applied in cases of this character. This is an extraordinary war measure and should be applied only in extraordinary cases, but district officers often apply this measure in ordinary cases also when it suits them to gain their ends.

Now, Sir, when this matter came up to Government, they reviewed the cases and found no justification whatsoever in keeping these three gentlemen under detention and on the 21st November they were released.

Sir, the overzealous District Magistrate was not satisfied with this and so he again re-arrested these gentlemen after a week. Mr. Manindra Bhushan Sinha, M.L.A., was again taken in custody and brought from his village home at Bhadul to the district headquarters of Bankura. Then he was again sent to *hajat* and when there was a discussion with the District Magistrate, the District Magistrate told Mr. Sinha that he could not tolerate the order of Government setting him free, as it involved loss of prestige of District Officers.

Sir, I must frankly submit that ever since the last Ministry came into power, there has been this sort of mentality in the countryside amongst Government officers, particularly district officers and their subordinates. They feel that they must have their own way and I must say that they were given indulgence in this respect by the previous Ministry.

Sir, we know the conditions in the countryside. Collective fines have been imposed in many places. Police have been let loose and they are never controlled by Government. That is the situation which has been created some time ago. If a true picture of the countryside is to be given, then one must say that life under the British Administration has become intolerable. If the people could leave those places, they would have done so forthwith, but that is not possible.

Sir, I was today surprised to listen to the speech of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. I should say that it was blood-curdling. Their leaders have shown their own mentality. They are trying to come into power. I do not know what will happen when they come into power if ever they do so. He was very uncharitable when discussing about the activities of the Congress.

Sir, the Government try to suppress the Congress organisation and their activities because the Congress demand freedom for the people of this country: Government have put Mahatma Gandhi in jail because he as the leader of the Congress and of India as a whole has placed the case of India's freedom ably and forcefully not only before the British Government but

before the whole world. The Government of this country do not care for the welfare of this country: the Government of this country want to keep this unfortunate land of ours in perpetual bondage. It is for that reason that they want to crush the Congress, it is for that reason that they want to clap in jail all the leaders of India who are in the Congress organisation. Sir, we have noticed not only now but for years past that whenever there has been any freedom movement in the country, that movement has been sought to be crushed by the Government with an iron hand. We know what is the position today in Midnapore. We know also why in spite of the promise of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to institute an enquiry into the alleged excesses committed by the civil and military agents of Government in Midnapore that committee of enquiry has not yet been set up. We know very well who are behind all these things. We know what excesses are committed by the District Officers and by the Police at the instigation of the persons who are really at the head of the Government to crush any movement that is started for the freedom of the country. The case of Midnapore may be a typical one in Bengal but it is not Midnapore alone which has suffered. Whenever there is a strong agitation in any part of the province, that agitation is sought to be crushed with a strong hand.

Sir, the whole nation has been unarmed but even if the unarmed people take part in any demonstration against the oppressive Government, even though that demonstration be peaceful, horrible excesses are committed by Government to suppress even a peaceful and non-violent movement. And what is more, if on account of the terrible oppression of Government people are goaded to take to any retaliatory measure against the oppressor, at once the whole engine of governmental machinery comes down upon them with such ruthless oppression as words would fail to describe. And this mighty British Government in India do not feel ashamed to carry on violent repression upon a totally unarmed and non-violent people.

Then, Sir, we find that much capital is sought to be made of the present relationship between the Ministry on the one hand and the Governor and the permanent officials on the other, and it has been suggested that it is the duty of the Ministry to support whatever action has been taken by Government officials, no matter whether they had given their previous consent to such action. I think we should all hang down our head in shame when we find our own countrymen seeking to make some political capital out of the present strained relationship between the Ministry and the subordinate officials of Government. Sir, it has been said by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that we have a responsible Government in our province. But is the Government really responsible? Does it realise the responsibility? A responsible Government is a Government of the people, for the people and by the people. A responsible Government is one which must submit itself to public opinion. But, Sir, here in Bengal the position is quite different. Here, a responsible Government is not one which is amenable to public opinion but one which always, according to the views expressed by my

friend, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, meekly submits itself to the excesses committed by the permanent officials of Government who are the real masters of the land. I shudder to think how a countryman of ours can think in that way. I should think that the attitude taken by the present Ministry that it would not support any and every act of omission and commission of the permanent officials is commendable although I do not consider that the present Government has done what can be expected of a popular Government. But we must give the Government its due and we must admit that the Government has never supported such actions taken by the Governor and the permanent officials which go against the real interests of the people of the land. Now, Sir, I shall cite one instance of the highhandedness of a district official, and here I again refer to the unfortunate district of Midnapore. You are well aware, Sir, as to how Mr Khan, the District Magistrate of Midnapore, has been censured by the highest judiciary in the land, I mean, the Calcutta High Court, for the highhandedness committed by him in the discharge of his official duties. But what has been the result of the strictures passed on him by the High Court? By this time, Sir, this *zabardast* officer should have been removed from his position as the District Magistrate of Midnapore, but we know why nothing has been done. Sir, it has been proved beyond all shadow of doubt that this overzealous officer has done things which cannot be justified on any account. Instead of punishing this irresponsible and highhanded officer, he has been allowed to carry on oppression unchecked——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Rather, he is going to be promoted for his highhanded actions in Midnapore to a high office in Calcutta.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Dr. Sanyal says that this officer instead of being punished is going to be promoted for his highhanded actions in Midnapore. We know, Sir, whenever an officer has acted against the interests of the people with an eye to promoting the interests of the white rulers of this country, he has invariably been in the good books of the Governor and of the highly placed permanent officials. And the result of that is that he earns a promotion. Sir, this reminds me of the rule of the Great Moghuls of Delhi. When they rose to the height of their glory during the reign of emperor Aurangzeb, the fall of the Moghul rule began as a result of suspicion of and tyranny on the people of the country. Sir, the British Empire is on the pinnacle of glory today, but I am afraid the ruthless oppression on the people and the mistrust and suspicion of the people and the overzealousness of its members may bring about that fall, but if they do not, certainly the prestige and the honour of the British Government will not be enhanced by such actions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion, Sir, to raise a discussion on the maladministration of the Board of Revenue and the grievances of the public in regard thereto.

Unlike my previous motions, in which questions of policy were raised, Sir, here I rise to propose this token cut as a protest against the Revenue administration of this province. It is not of the character of a censure motion but it is a motion to criticize the administration of Government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the regulations creating the offices of the Board of Revenue, the Commissioners and the Collectors and their history would indicate that these estimable persons are required to administer law and justice in revenue matters but they are now being saddled with more and more duties in connection with the Sales Tax, Excise Tax, Land Revenue Settlement and other things, and as the duties of these officers are multiplying, the administration of justice is deteriorating and these officers are making themselves more and more scarce. While members of the public are being confronted with special and peculiar problems, and they are coming up to these officials, more and more stringent methods are being evoked by the officials to avoid approach, to avoid hearing, to avoid the time and trouble of looking up and interpreting the law. The result is that a peculiar system has been or is being developed under which the only thing noticeable is that the officers are trying to minimise their work, whatever may be the injustice, whatever the inconvenience that may be caused to the public, to those who pay the taxes that maintain these highly paid officers in their office. I may mention one concrete case which will go to show how very hopeless the administration of the Revenue Board has become of late. If a person puts in a petition of appeal or motion to the Board of Revenue—the highest Revenue Court of Appeal, the person has to go to the Board along with a lawyer whom he has paid with a petition duly stamped for which he has to pay to the Government for the hearing and adjudication of the problem and of the order against which he has petitioned. What happens is that the petitioner and the lawyer cannot find the Member of the Board of Revenue sitting in an open court for the public to approach. He is tucked up somewhere in a well-sequestered, well-furnished, absolutely quiet room in the upper storey of the Writers' Buildings. The petitioner and the lawyer after cooling their heels in a dingy room on the ground floor and after several steps to and fro for a considerable lapse of time are ushered into the room of the Member of the Board of Revenue. Then the petitioner and the lawyer are laconically told that under the rules which no statute but only he or his predecessors have framed, the petitioner with the lawyer must go to another room on the back side of the building where the keeper of the Board of Revenue's not only conscience but the intelligence, nay the store-house of the legal lore, sits, namely, the Sheristadar. "The Hon'ble Member of the Board of Revenue", the unfortunate people who pay taxes are cryptically told, "does not receive petitions direct". After having duly filed the petition before the keeper of conscience—a ministerial officer, the unfortunate people are left to speculate on the fate of the stages and periods of gestation the petition must go through. It may be noted that like the Civil or Criminal Procedure Code the mighty Revenue authorities up to date have evolved no Revenue Procedure Code which ordinary mortals

can understand and go by. The convention well-established however is that the Sheristadar puts up what is termed in official parlance a note. How the note develops I would not like to discuss. The party is not expected to know anything about it in theory; whether in practice he does know or if so how I would not like to discuss for the present. The "note" proceeds to the Honourble Member. The Honourble Member in a large majority of cases gives the party no hearing and the case is what they say "disposed of". The bewildered party runs about to present his point of view, his lawyers sneak about "to have a hearing" but no hearing, no interpretation can stand any chance against the "note" that has been put up. Sir, in this way the Honourable Member gives his final decision one day and the unfortunate petitioner who has paid his fees to the lawyer and has paid stamp duty remains completely in the dark as to how things have shaped. Now the standard thus set by the highest Revenue Authority is followed by all the subordinates of the bigger categories. The Presidency Divisional Commissioner has, it is understood, issued a notice to all the Collectors under him that all appeals must be discouraged and in case any appeal is pressed heavy costs are advised to be imposed on the party on rejection of the appeal. This goes on right to the bottom. The Collector, 24-Parganas, has recently thought it necessary to stop even the pay of all the Courts of Wards Managers under him. There are no proceedings against them. There is no actual suspension order against them, but on the advice of the Court of Wards-Deputy Collector he thought fit to issue a *firman* that their pay must be stopped. This kind of administration is going on from top to bottom and it is so hopeless and rotten that something must be done to find out a proper remedy.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to introduce legislation extending the Calcutta Improvement Trust to Howrah.

Sir, the need for an Improvement Trust in Howrah which could do something to bring about improvement in living conditions in a crowded industrial area which has become notorious for its insanitary *bustees* has long been recognised. Since 1916 there have been innumerable conferences under Government auspices to consider the question of extending the Calcutta Improvement Trust to Howrah, but until 1939 no final settlement was reached, owing mainly to lack of agreement on the question of finance. In September, 1939, however, a conference was held under the Chairmanship of the then Hon'ble Minister of Local Self-Government, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca. An agreement, it is understood, was reached upon the financial and administrative arrangement with regard to the extension of the Improvement Trust to Howrah. As a result of that agreement Howrah Municipality has from the 1st April, 1940, increased their consolidated rates by 2½ per cent. in order to meet their share of the expenses of the Trust. It was understood that Government would introduce legislation immediately

giving effect to the agreement. Although Howrah Municipality have continued to levy at the increased rate on the rate-payers of Howrah, Government have so far failed to introduce the necessary legislation. In March, 1941, eighteen months after the conference, the Hon'ble Minister in charge stated in reply to a question in this House that the recommendations of the conference had been considered by Government in consultation with the trustees of the Improvement Trust and the Commissioners of the Howrah Municipality and that steps were being taken to introduce the necessary legislation as early as possible. In January, 1943, the present Minister for Local Self-Government, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, is reported to have said at a public meeting in Howrah that steps were being taken for the early publication of the legislation for extension of the Improvement Trust to Howrah. This is the 23rd March, and we are still waiting for the publication of the Bill. The Bill was, we understand, drafted at least two years ago. Since then we presume it has been passing from officer to officer with suitable intervals for rest. The file must by now have attained truly noble proportions. We do not wish to attach particular blame to the present Hon'ble Minister in charge. The fault is shared by the previous Ministry, but it is an unfortunate fact that the legislative plans of the Local Self-Government Department seldom seem to come to fruition. Our apprehension is that although an agreed solution of the problem was reached in 1939, the opportunity to give this agreement concrete form is in danger of being lost owing to the failure of Government to introduce the necessary legislation. The legislation is not controversial. It has the support of all sections of the public, and we see no reason why it should be postponed owing to war conditions. We quite appreciate that it may not be possible to take up ambitious improvement scheme during war-time, but we consider that the necessary legislation should be considered and passed immediately, so that plans and preparations for improvement schemes to be carried out after the war can be made. Moreover further delay may mean that the settlement reached will be in danger and that the whole question will have to be re-examined again after the war. Furthermore we would point out that the ratepayers of Howrah who have been paying the additional rate of 2½ per cent. since April, 1940, have a very real grievance against Government. The increased rate forms part of the general revenues of the Municipality, and if there is further delay it may be found that the money which has been collected in this way is not available for the purposes of the Improvement Trust. We ask Government to declare definitely when the proposed legislation will be introduced and considered by the Legislature. If it is not considered possible to introduce the legislation in this House during the current session, then we would suggest that it should be introduced in and considered by the Council during the present session.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by a sum of Rs. 100. I beg to move this

motion in order to raise a discussion on the irregularities in the attendance of Commissioners, District Magistrates and Subdivisional Officers at their respective offices and courts.

Sir, I fully realise that coming down from the high pedestal of the constitutional issue raised in my first motion regarding the interference of the highest executive in the decisions or recommendations of the Council of Ministers, this would look like a bathos. But, Sir, criticising as we do the administration in all its aspects in the budget debate I cannot but draw attention to these serious matters of administration in which the public of Bengal are put to great inconveniences in various parts of the province. Sir, it has come to our notice that most of the Commissioners and almost all the District Magistrates and almost everyone of the Subdivisional Officers today are failing in their duty to attend their respective courts in time, and to permit the public to approach them in the courts where alone there can be a definite and public access to such officials.

Taking two instances, Sir, I have found on definite enquiry myself that the Divisional Commissioner, Presidency Division, never attends his office and the District Magistrate of the 24-Parganas never attends his court. And what happens? The result is that the public who have to approach them either by themselves or through lawyers have to go there through a few selected favourites of theirs who can approach them at all odd hours at their houses, or through the bearers, the highly robed bearers in their respective places who stand as a barrier and who have got to be pleased before access can be had at the respective houses. Sir, I have seen the plight of one estimable advocate of the High Court loitering in the grounds of the District Magistrate's house at Alipore. He wanted to move a bail application in the afternoon, and, Sir, he had to wait for four long hours under the cool shed (laughter), of course there was no Sun, under a tree, because there was no proper place to wait even, and after having waited for so long a period he got a few minutes' interview and he was asked again to come the following day. Sir, time has come for Government to take this matter up seriously.

I understand that there was a time when some District Magistrates, like the District Magistrate of Midnapore, were allowed to hold their offices in their houses because of alleged terrorist activities, but, Sir, that time has long gone and it is only fair now that the public should have a proper opportunity to meet the officials of the District in their courts. I only submit, Sir, that if Government find that some additional work is being devolved upon these officials which prevent them from attending to their court duties properly, then they should make proper arrangements for appointing other officers, so that the public can get access to such officers in their courts and that these may have complete powers like the District Magistrates and the Commissioners to deal with matters in which their intervention is necessary.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: They have taken shelter under A.R.P.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1;29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the working of Municipalities and District Boards in Bengal.

Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the Ministers and of the members of this House to the position prevailing in respect of the Local Self-Government Department and the subject with which it deals, namely, the ability of the people to govern themselves as revealed by their activities in Municipal and District Board Administration. It is significant that it should be necessary for us at this date to have to draw the attention of Hon'ble Ministers to this subject. We have recently had a spate of metaphor, most inappositely and unwisely taken from food to explain to us the unhappy position of impotence in which the Ministry professes to find itself in a number of subjects. Sir, if we were asked for a metaphor to describe the Department of Local Self-Government, we should say that the water-hyacinth flourishes in great profusion on the stagnant pond in which this Department sank many a long year ago. Let me support the metaphor with a few hard prosaic facts. Sir, the Resolution of the Government of Bengal on the working of the Municipalities in Bengal during the year 1940-41 is dated 8th February, 1943, and was published on the 25th February. The last Resolution reviewing the working of District and Local Boards is dated 28th June, 1941, 21 months ago and relates to the year 1939-40, a year ending 15 months previously. Thirty-six months ago, Sir, 3 solid years! This is the manner in which the Administration puts its results before the public. Now, Sir, it is, I hope, as obvious to other members of this House as it is to us on this side that this question of Local Self-Government should be a question both of a filtering down from above and of building up from below, a matter of the filtering down of a broader spirit of enlightenment and of energy and efficiency in administration from above and the building up of the health, education and prosperity of the people on the better elements below. If one may judge by hearsay, however, nothing is done because as has become the fashion with our academic administrators there are rival theories as to where to begin. Nothing is done, Sir, that is the point, and I challenge the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department to say when during the past year he has illuminated this subject for the benefit of this House, for the benefit of the Municipalities or for the benefit of the country at large with the undoubted light of his intelligence. Well may one echo the words put by the poet into the mouth of Samson blinded "Dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon" and the quotation is not inapposite, for a people prospering in and under Local Self-Government would indeed be a Samson. But the people, Sir, are blind, because the Minister in charge and his Department fail to open their eyes, to inspire them, to lead and encourage them and to check them when they

go astray. And with such a lack of leadership and such an example from the Cabinet what do the members of this House do, what can they be expected to do?

Now, Sir, the views that I am urging on the House are not my own invention. They are facts, facts which the Ministry by implication has confirmed. The Resolution on the working of the Municipalities in 1940-41 lends the authority of Government to some very strong reports by Divisional Commissioners on the then grievous state of affairs. It then goes on:—

> "It will not, however, be correct to lay all the blame on the municipal commissioners alone. The ratepayers too much bear their share of responsibility for the present state of affairs, as they have generally shown very little civic sense and little realisation of the fact that public amenities cannot be had unless they are paid for. Unless, therefore, there is a growth of the civic sense and a better appreciation of their civic duties and responsibilities by the municipal commissioners as well as the ratepayers, it would be idle to expect any real lasting improvement of the general standard of municipal administration."

The blame is deftly apportioned. It would not do these days to admit that the Commissioners are wholly right so the people are also to blame. But if one looks in this Resolution for what the Ministry has done about it in 1941 or 1942 and what it proposes to do in 1943 one looks in vain and such inquiries as I have been able to make have not revealed anything.

Perhaps, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister hesitates to engage in publicity on this subject, to paint a picture of what might be if rather more energy and disinterestedness were put into the subject. For the public might then say "look upon that picture and on this". And what is this picture? We in Calcutta, Sir, know well enough. We are acquainted—acquainted through the nose with the stinking rubbish heaps, acquainted through the eyes with the growing army of beggars who batten on them, acquainted through the ears with tales—tales, Sir? Well-substantiated facts, of growing maladministration, of nepotism and corruption, of outstandings doubled during 1941-42 and probably trebled during the past year. I say "trebled". The Hon'ble Minister knows the position but is the House aware that on the 13th February last Calcutta Corporation's outstandings totalled Rs. 72 lakhs approximately or one-third of the total demand for the year? This was Rs. 10 lakhs more than the outstanding on the same date in 1942. An outstanding of only Rs. 27 lakhs at the end of this month would seem to be an optimistic estimate. And then, Sir, Calcutta Corporation asks Government for more money! The Hon'ble Minister has appointed a special officer to inquire into that request. When may we expect his report and is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to pledge the Ministry to fearless action on it?

Sir, I need not enter into a catalogue of the many aspects of defective administration which offend every sense in this City. They are too well-known. And if this is the position in Calcutta, what, may I ask, is the position in Howrah? Howrah, Sir, whose outstandings on the 31st March, 1941, were close on Rs. 14 lakhs when an energetic Collector in Calcutta had reduced this City's outstandings to Rs. 9 lakhs. Who ever heard of anyone visiting Howrah for pleasure? And small wonder! This question of outstandings may be viewed from various angles. I wish only to put two of them before the House. In the first place, Sir, with prices today standing so high in relation to pre-war, it is a very favourable time in fact for all debtors to clear debts incurred in times past. I am aware that various interested parties, including the numerous creditor element, will seek to persuade the people of the contrary. But those who are genuinely and disinterestedly concerned with the welfare of the people should explain to them that the current price range has greatly reduced the burden of their indebtedness and now is the time to liquidate it once for all.

Secondly, Sir, I wish to illustrate as vividly as I can the evils which follow on the laxity of Municipal Collectors. It may be said that ratepayers do not mind bad drains, that they do not miss the amenities which good administration would provide, that they do not associate their bad health with the bad administration which continues, but can it be said that they do not care for their own children? Sir, the point demonstrates the ignorance which prevails and which so far as we can see the Hon'ble Minister has done little or nothing to dissipate. For the entire municipal expenditure on primary education in 1940-41 was Rs. 6½ lakhs. At the end of March, 1941, the total municipal outstandings were Rs. 41½ lakhs, in other words, Sir, six times the whole amount which the Municipal Commissioners spent on primary education under their control. That means to say that had the ratepayers and the public known the position had they applied the requisite pressure, they might have had six times the amount of educational benefit for their children. Yet the Hon'ble Minister and his department content themselves with blaming the ratepayers two years after the event in the pages of the *Calcutta Gazette*! How does the Hon'ble Minister expect people to know the facts if he, their elected and appointed guardian, does not tell them?

Sir, I have spoken of the lack of energy in administration, the lack of publicity and above all of the lack of leadership from above. These deficiencies are in our view symptomatic of a grave state of affairs. They are grave enough indeed to blast the hope of any self-government founded in the willing acceptance by the people of a social system to live for, to work for and to fight for. One day if the Hon'ble Minister and his class do not exert themselves there will be an explosion of crude human consciousness and conscience against this carelessness and neglect. The Hon'ble Minister will plead before the House that he is trying his utmost and planning his best. Sir, I ask "Can we rely on him to do so?" He has had sixteen months and his resolutions are still two years behind the times.

He is preoccupied. Is that any answer? Where are his publicity and his plans? Can he clear himself of the charge that by not ensuring that his department is efficiently administered, by not having brought vigour into his dealings with those under his care, by not meting out punishment to delinquents and by not encouraging and inspiring the people with a renewed sense of civic rights and responsibilities, he has himself supported and encouraged the deterioration which, however strongly he personally may disapprove it, appears to proceed apace? We on this side of the House know how to answer that question. I trust, Sir, that the House will join with us in answering it by supporting the motion which I beg to move.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-53 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Wednesday, the 24th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 24th March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 8 Hon'ble Ministers and 199 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Health of Mr. Brojendranath Das, a security prisoner.

***191. Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAJUMDER:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the left lung of Mr. Brojendranath Das, security prisoner, was found to be in a stage of infiltration as a result of X'ray examination on the 5th October, 1942;

(*ii*) that spitting of blood occurred on the 19th October, 1942, and continued for 3 days;

(*iii*) that his weight came down by 12 lbs.;

(*iv*) that sugar was detected in his urine; and

(*v*) that the Medical Officer of the Presidency Jail recommended his early transfer to a sanatorium for better treatment?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*v*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether he has been transferred to a sanatorium; if so, where; and

(*ii*) what arrangement has been made for his special treatment?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the wife of Mr. Das will be allowed by Government all necessary facilities to attend on him?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*)(*i*) X'ray examination on the 5th October, 1942, showed the following:—"A small deposit at the upper zone suggests productive infiltration. Root shadows enlarged. Both lungs show evidence of bronchitis."

(*ii*), (*iii*) and (*v*) Yes

(*iv*) No.

(*b*) The prisoner was transferred to the Suri Jail for segregation and treatment. Since his arrival at Suri Jail the prisoner showed no signs and symptoms of active Tuberculosis and accordingly he has since been ordered to be retransferred to Presidency Jail.

(*c*) I shall consider the matter if and when the prisoner's condition becomes such as would render his wife's attendance on him essential.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), wherein it is stated that since his arrival at Suri Jail the prisoner showed no signs and symptoms of active tuberculosis and accordingly he has since been ordered to be retransferred to Presidency Jail, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the prisoner was suffering from insipient tuberculosis?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The suspicion was about tuberculosis.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that a patient suffering from insipient tuberculosis should receive proper medical treatment and should necessarily be detained at a place where active signs of tuberculosis will disappear?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, I am issuing orders to that effect. The suggestion made by the honourable member will be given effect to, and everything will be done to give him proper medical aid.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the patient's retransference to the Presidency Jail is likely to endanger the lives of other prisoners there by infection?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a question for the purpose of eliciting information. That is a question of opinion, pure and simple.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: My question is whether there are any arrangements for the segregation of tuberculosis patients in the Presidency Jail.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware, but these cases are so frequent that I feel sure that there are some arrangements.

Medical treatment of Babu Kedareswar Sen Gupta, a security prisoner.

***192. Mr. JANANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDER:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that security prisoner Babu Kedareswar Sen Gupta has been suffering for a long time from an advanced stage of intestinal tuberculosis and other ailments; and

(*ii*) that while he was in the Hijli Special Jail he was examined by (1) the Civil Surgeon of Midnapore; (2) (*A*) the Civil Surgeon, (*B*) the Medical Officer, and (*C*) the Superintendent of the Hijli Special Jail?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative. will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what were their recommendations regarding Kedareswar Babu; and

(*ii*) what action, if any, has been taken on those recommendations?

(*c*) Is it a fact that during and after his transfer from the Hijli Special Jail his brother, security prisoner Babu Saral Chandra Sen Gupta, applied for permission to accompany him for nursing?

(*d*) If so, was the permission granted to him?

(*e*) If no permission was granted to his brother, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*f*) Is it a fact that Kedareswar Babu is not fit to do any mental or physical work?

(*g*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of releasing him or sending him to any sanatorium?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) His case has since been diagnosed as a case of chronic dyspepsia.

(*ii*) The prisoner was examined by the Civil Surgeon, Midnapore, and the Medical Officer of the Hijli Special Jail.

(*b*) (*i*) The Civil Surgeon, Midnapore, recommended the prisoner's transfer to a bracing climate where better nursing and proper treatment could be carried out and pending that, the prisoner's immediate transfer to the Medical College Hospitals, Calcutta.

(*ii*) He was transferred to the Medical College Hospitals, Calcutta.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) and (*g*) No.

(*e*) It was not considered necessary.

(*f*) He is not fit to do any physical work. I have no information as to his ability to do mental work.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: The Hon'ble Minister may well remember that in connection with another question relating to the same prisoner he was kind enough to tell the House that the patient would be permitted to get himself examined by an expert of his own choice. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have taken any steps in that direction?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As far as I am aware a prisoner's application to be examined by a medical officer of his own choice is not granted except under very exceptional circumstances. If an application is made, I will consult the department and if any permission can be given legitimately that permission will not be withheld.

Family allowance for Mr. Manmatha Nath Das, a security prisoner.

***193. Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware—

(*i*) that Babu Monmatha Nath Das, Advocate, Calcutta High Court, who belongs to Midnapore and is now under detention is the only earning member of his family;

(*ii*) that after his detention there has been financial distress in his family; and

(*iii*) that his family is without any means of support?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, are the Government considering the desirability of granting suitable allowance for the maintenance of his family at an early date?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) I have no information in the matter.

(*b*) The question of granting him family allowance is under my examination.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the Government received his application for family allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I find that the office note on the application is dated 20th February, 1943; so, it must have reached Government a few days before that.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the arrest and detention of Babu Manmatha Nath Das and the date on which he was arrested?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a different question altogether, and I must ask for notice.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has got any report from the official source with regard to the application for allowance of Mr. Manmatha Nath Das?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not find that in my papers, and I cannot say.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*b*), how long is the question under his examination?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact I have not had time to consider his application yet.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when will Government expect to take a decision on his application?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As soon as our occupation in this Assembly ceases a decision will be taken on his application. At present it is practically impossible to take a decision.

Family allowance for Mr. Manmatha Nath Das, a security prisoner.

***194. Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether any family allowance has been granted to any security prisoner arrested since August, 1942?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Mr. Manmatha Nath Das (now in Alipore Central Jail) has been granted any family allowance?

(*c*) Has the Hon'ble Minister received any petition from him by the end of October, 1942, for the grant of family allowance?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, has been taken on it?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*c*) Yes.

(*b*) Not yet.

(*d*) This is pending report from local officers who have been urgently reminded.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the application of Mr. Manmatha Nath Das reached his office?

(No answer was given.)

Family allowance for a number of security prisoners.

***195. Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Political) Department be pleased to state whether any family allowance has been granted to the following security prisoners, viz.,—

(1) Sj. Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee of Dinajpur;

(2) Sj. Dhirendra Nath Banerjee, B.A., L.M.F., of Dinajpur;

(3) Sj. Kulada Chakravarty of Mymensingh;

(4) Sj. Brojendra Nath Das of Faridpur;

(5) Sj. Prafulla Kumar Tripathy of Jalpaiguri;

(6) Sj. Nirmal Kumar Roy, M.A., of Midnapore;

(7) Sj. Nripendra Kumar Roy of Dinajpur;

(8) Sj. Tarapada Dhar of Dinajpur;

(9) Sj. Kalinarayan Sanyal, Muktear, of Balurghat, Dinajpur;

(10) Sj. Narendra Kumar Das of Dinajpur;

(11) Sj. Ramesh Chandra Bhowmick;

(12) Sj. Basanta Kumar Das of Midnapore;

(13) Sj. Sushil Chandra Deb of Rangpur;

(14) Sj. Pratul Gobinda Deb of Rangpur;

(15) Sj. Trailokya Nath Chakrabarty of Dacca;

(16) Sj. Kedareswar Sen Gupta of Dacca;

(17) Sj. Manish Sen of Rangpur;

(18) Miss Nirmala Roy, B.A., of Faridpur;

(19) Miss Susoma Roy of Faridpur;

(20) Mrs. Prativa Roy Chaudhuri;

(21) Miss Saila Sen, B.A., B.T., of Dacca;

(22) Mrs. Labanya Das Gupta of Dacca;

(23) Miss Banalata Sen;

(24) Sj. Banamali Jana of Howrah;

(25) Sj. Muralidhar Jana of Howrah; and

(26) Sj. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A. (Advocate)?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount given to each of them; and

(*ii*) when they were arrested, confined and the dates when they were granted the allowance?

(*c*) If no allowance has been granted to any one of the abovenamed prisoners, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*d*) Is it a fact—

(*i*) that there are members related to each of those prisoners who solely depended for their maintenance on these prisoners; and

(*ii*) many of the prisoners were earning a substantial income?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister consider it desirable to hold immediate enquiries—

(*i*) in cases where no allowance has been granted; and also

(*ii*) in cases where inadequate allowance has been granted in reference to the number of dependants in each case?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) to (*c*) A statement is placed on the Library Table.

(*d*) I am unable to give information in regard to the cases in which reports are being awaited from local officers. As regards the cases which were found unsuitable for allowances my information is otherwise.

(*e*) As the cases were recently reviewed by me, I consider it unnecessary to hold any further inquiries.

Tribunal for political security prisoners.

*196. **Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) when the Tribunal, promised by the Hon'ble Home Minister in reply to the resolution moved by the questioner on the 13th March, 1942, to examine the cases of political security prisoners, was set up;

(*ii*) the number of security prisoners who replied to the questionnaire supplied to them;

(*iii*) the number of security prisoners who appeared before the Tribunal in person;

(*iv*) the number of cases examined by it;

(*v*) the number of cases recommended by it for release;

(*vi*) when the Tribunal finished its labour and submitted its report: and

(*vii*) whether Government have considered the report and the recommendations contained therein?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*vii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when he is likely to consider the report and the recommendations;

(*ii*) when he expects to finish the consideration of the report and come to definite decisions; and

(*iii*) whether the consideration of the recommendations will be taken up during the pendency of the Assembly Session?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) 8th May, 1942.

(*ii*) to (*v*) I consider that the disclosure of the information would be against public interest.

(*vi*) On the 27th August, 1942.

(*a*) (*vii*), (*b*), (*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) I refer the honourable member to my reply to (*b*) of starred question No. 54.

(*iii*) No.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) wherein it is stated that the disclosure of the information was not desirable, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the disclosure of the number and not the names is undesirable?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The same objection holds good to the number as to the names.

Reviewing the cases of certain security prisoners of the Dacca Central Jail by the Tribunal.

***197. Babu JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether the Tribunal appointed by the Government to review the cases of security prisoners detained in jails under the Defence of India Rules have submitted their findings and recommendations?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many prisoners were found by the Tribunal to be such against whom no *prima facie* case could be established;

(*ii*) how many were recommended for release;

(*iii*) how many of those recommended have been released;

(*iv*) what other recommendations were made by the Tribunal; and

(*v*) what action the Government propose to take on the findings and recommendations of the Tribunal?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state whether he received two joint representations from about 80 security prisoners of Dacca Central Jail setting forth their views and protesting against the procedure of—

(1) reviewing their cases by the Tribunal;

(2) the nature of allegation against them; and

(3) the questionnaire sent to them for reply?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table copies of those representations?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) to (*iv*) I am not prepared to furnish this information in the public interest.

(*v*) I refer the honourable member to my reply to the starred question No. 54.

(*c*) Yes. These were placed before the Tribunal.

(*d*) I am not prepared to do this in the public interest.

Firing within Bolepur station compound in Birbhum district.

***198. Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state whether a firing took place on the 29th August, 1942, at Bolepore station compound in the district of Birbhum, on a crowd of men waiting outside the station building?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(c) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(i) the number of persons (1) killed and (2) wounded amongst the public and the police;

(ii) under whose order the firing was opened;

(iii) who actually did the firing;

(iv) whether the District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police was present during the incident;

(v) whether any armed Police force was on duty during the time at Bolepore; and

(vi) whether there was any transport or communication difficulty between Bolepore and Suri, the Headquarter station at the time?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (a) No.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any firing took place in Bolepur?

Mr. SPEAKER: Your supplementary is very vague. Your question related to a particular date. To that a negative answer has been given. Now you ask whether there has been any firing at all.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Near about that date.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I find that a mob of about 5,000 persons led by volunteers and some armed with bows and arrows attacked the railway station at Bolepur on the 29th August, 1942. The police party led by the Superintendent, Government Railway Police, Howrah, opened fire. That must be on the 29th August.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Then why the answer "No" is there?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We have not understood the Chief Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: It appears to me that there is some confusion. The question is this: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state whether firing took place on the 29th August, 1942, at Bolepur station compound in the district of Birbhum on a crowd of men waiting outside the station compound? The answer is "No". But to a supplementary question whether there was any firing near about that date the Hon'ble Chief Minister has stated the facts which you have just now heard.

Mr. P. BANERJI: There was firing on the 29th.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I further find that there was no firing on any crowd waiting outside Bolepur station.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The Hon'ble Minister admits that there was firing.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has been admitted.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of casualties that occurred as a result of that firing?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Eight men of the police force sustained severe injuries in consequence of an attack by brickbats, stones, etc. Two men of the mob were killed and eight were injured.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who actually did the firing? That is question (*c*)(*iii*).

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It introduces a new matter altogether, but I am prepared to give my friend the information. The police party led by the Superintendent, Government Railway Police, Howrah, opened fire. The mob became more violent. In the meantime the Railway Auxiliary Force arrived and opened fire.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result of the firing? Were all the shots misfired?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already given the list of casualties.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: That was the result of brickbat throwing. What is the result of firing?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has said that two persons were killed and, as far as I remember, eight were injured on account of firing.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I shall be obliged if you will ask the Chief Minister to repeat that information which he has given to the House. We have understood him to say that eight people were injured due to brickbats.

Mr. SPEAKER: That part is also correct; that is the first part. Perhaps you could not hear the second part.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will you kindly ask him to repeat?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have answered piecemeal, but I am prepared to put the whole information before the House. A mob of about 5,000 persons led by volunteers and some armed with bows and arrows attacked the railway station, Bolepur, on the 29th August, 1942. The police party led by the Superintendent, Government Railway Police, Howrah, opened fire. The mob became more violent. In the meantime the Railway Auxiliary Force arrived and opened fire. Eight men of the police force sustained injuries by brickbats, stones, etc. Two men of the mob were killed and eight injured. The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police visited the place next day. There was no firing on any crowd waiting outside Bolepur railway station.

Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police gave any order for the firing?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: These are matters of detail. I must have notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what led the Howrah Police to come to Bolepur station?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The Hon'ble Chief Minister has said that the mob was led by volunteers. Will he please say volunteers of which organisation or body led the mob?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There are so many organisations at the present moment that it is very difficult to say unless they reveal their identity.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: What led the Chief Minister to state that they were led by volunteers?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the report.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That may be the report, but what led him to state so. They were not identified. Were they wearing any badges?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say. The reason is that sometimes people are hired to join a mob and they are perhaps euphemistically called volunteers.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Are we to assume that the Hon'ble Minister means to say that they were hirelings?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not hazarding any opinion.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any armed police force was on duty or whether there was any transport?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have given all the information I possess. I cannot add anything more.

Realisation of collective fines in the Birbhum district.

***199. Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether any collective fines have been imposed and realised in the district of Birbhum?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the names of the places where the fine has been imposed;

(*ii*) the amount of fine (1) imposed and (2) realised; and

(*iii*) the reason thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any community, party or individual has been exempted from payment of a share?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of applications, if any, received for exemption;

(*ii*) the number of applicants that were exempted; and

(*iii*) whether the fine was realised from any Government servant?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*), (*b*) (*i*) and (*ii*) (1) I refer the honourable member to notification No. 19854P., dated the 17th September, 1942, published in the *Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary*, dated the 18th September, 1942, and Nos. 1, dated the 30th January, 1943, and 3, dated the 16th February, 1943, published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated the 11th February, 1943, and 25th February, 1943, respectively, copies of which are placed on the Library Table.

(2) Rs.19,700.

(*iii*) I refer the honourable member to the terms of the notifications and as regards Bolepore and Dubrajpur to the Press-note published on or about the 8th September, 1942, and of which a copy is placed on the Library Table.

(*c*) Except as shown in answer to (*c*) (*ii*), No.

(*d*) Individuals were exempted, in accordance with principles which I have already laid before the House, on a consideration of their individual cases as to which I have no details.

(*e*) (*i*) 43.

(*ii*) 9.

(*iii*) Yes.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*e*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the idea in realising collective fines from the Government servants who are supposed to co-operate with Government in maintaining law and order?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I understand this question of collective fines will have to be discussed in connection with cut motions, and I propose to make some statement then. I am prepared to answer questions now, but I think it would economise time if I am allowed to declare the Government policy in the course of that discussion. If after that any questions are necessary to be put up to me, I shall answer them.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the sum of Rs. 150 realised from the sale of the furniture of Mr. A. K. Chanda, Principal, Viswabharati College, is included in the amount of Rs. 19,700 shown in answer (*b*)(*2*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have heard about that. I have not been able to find out. I shall certainly find out and give the information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have satisfied themselves or made any enquiries as to the legality of the imposition on Mr. Chanda who belongs to a union different from the union or thana at which imposition was levied and whether Government are satisfied or they have made any enquiries to satisfy themselves if the acquisition of his furniture with the help of armed police constables has been legal?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Many of these statements now made by my learned friend are not known to me, but I know the case generally and I have asked for a report which I have not yet received. On receipt of the papers about which I shall take steps to expedite, I shall look into the matter and if there has been any irregularity or illegality, I shall try to rectify them.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the terms of the Ordinance are such and that the subsequent amendments made to the Ordinance after the claim of Mr. Anil Kumar Chanda has been laid to the Government have been such that it is practically impossible for Government to review the case?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a question of opinion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have taken the opinion of their Legal Remembrancer on this question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not yet, Sir, but I admit that the terms are stringent and as regards interpretation my friend is as much an expert as any of us.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the form of the opinion that has been taken by the Government from the Legal Remembrancer?

Mr. SPEAKER: You asked him whether they have taken legal opinion and he has said "not yet".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I know it has been taken. If it is not legal opinion, it may be some other opinion.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I have been waiting for a full report. As soon as I shall receive it, I shall obtain the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer and take such action as I will think to be proper.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Government of Bengal took initiative in getting the Ordinance suitably amended so that the local officers of Government may be exonerated from any liability arising out of the excesses or illegality perpetrated by them in execution of the terms of the Ordinance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As far as I am aware, initiative was not taken by Bengal. As a matter of fact, a proposal came from various provinces and Bengal was asked to give her opinion, but we did not take any initiative.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date or dates when the Government of Bengal or the province of Bengal received a solicitor's notice demanding compensation for the injury caused to Mr. Anil Kumar Chanda, and the date or dates when the amendment to Ordinance No. 2 of 1942 was promulgated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I realise that these are relevant questions, but I cannot answer them at the present moment. I take notice.

Supply of mosquito curtains and pillows to division III prisoners in jail.

***200. Mr. M. MOSLEM ALI MOLLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether there is a provision for supply by Government of mosquito curtains, pillows and other bedding requisites to the third class prisoners in a jail?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the supply of those articles from outside by the friends or relatives of the prisoners is allowed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The honourable member is referred to provisions under rules 1159, 1160, 1233 and 1242 of the Bengal Jail Code (Volume I), a copy of which is in the Library.

(*b*) Superintendents of jails are authorised to accept, at their discretion, mosquito curtains for division III prisoners from their friends and relatives but supply of pillows and other beddings requisites from outside is not allowed.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the year 1927 the late Sir P. C. Mitter gave an assurance to the Bengal Legislative Council that the matter of experimenting the supply of mosquito curtains to the Division III prisoners was being tried in the Pabna Jail and that the practice would soon be followed in other districts also?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to look at the proceedings of that year and see what was then assured?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a request for action.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are prepared to amend the Jail Code in such a way as to ensure the possibility of supplying mosquito curtains to every person without any discretion being vested in the Superintendent of the Jail?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a request for action, but I will consider it.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the difficulties which prevent the supply of mosquito curtains to Division III prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is very difficult to give an answer direct to this question. Departmental views will have to be obtained. I cannot say that offhand.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that there are various stations in the province where malaria rages in a very terrible degree and want of mosquito curtains is detrimental to health?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Superintendents of Sub-Jails are now authorised to accept mosquito curtains for Division III prisoners from their friends and relatives?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that. I must have notice.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are going to take any action on this question of supplying mosquito curtains to prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a request for action.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer at the present moment, but I am prepared to consider it.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons why the supply of pillows and other bedding requisites is not allowed to the prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Hon'ble Minister has already said that according to the Jail Code these are not allowed. You are asking him why they are not allowed. That is a question which perhaps concerns the framers of the Code. So this question does not arise.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any provision to stop mosquito-breeding in the jail compound?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Does the honourable member want to know whether the mosquitoes are to breed or not to breed? (Laughter.)

Balurghat incidents.

***201. Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department aware of the serious allegations regarding looting and destruction of properties by the police taking place in village areas in the Balurghat subdivision during September last?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister also be pleased to state whether he has received in the first week of November, 1942, any report, regarding the incidents referred to in (*a*)?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the said report?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any action has been taken to punish the offenders?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*b*) I received during the early part of November a report sent by the honourable member making certain allegations and also reports from the local officers upon the allegations made.

(*c*) and (*d*) No, Sir.

(*e*) I was satisfied on examining the papers that there was no ground for taking action.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the attention of the local officials has been formally drawn to the complaint made by the villagers of Moradanga, police-station Porsha, in Balurghat subdivision, stating that their houses, property, paddy and even cash from within their mud walls were looted by hooligans set on to loot by the police or armed police constables who were taken over there?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If my honourable friend will please give me some points on which I might pursue an enquiry, I shall be glad to reopen this question.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that properties were looted by the police and carried away by the police in the presence of the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police from the villages of Sitaldanga, Noapara, etc., in Balurghat subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In view of the fact that very serious allegations were made against the police by no less a person than an honourable member of this House, will the Government consider the desirability of having a sort of judicial enquiry without depending merely on papers submitted by the local officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: At the present moment it is not possible for me to say whether that suggestion can be accepted, but as I have said in reply to Dr. Sanyal, if materials are supplied to me which will justify a reopening of the matter, I shall be glad to do so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the Court of the Subdivisional Magistrate of Balurghat a petition was filed by Chhatra Oraon, son of Somra Oraon, of village Miranti, police-station Balurghat, against a number of persons about 30, complaining that——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, may I suggest that the question be held over so that I may go through the papers. It seems there are reasons for my friends to be dissastisfied with the answer I have given.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is held over.

Damage to crops due to breaches in the Gumti embankment.

***202. Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works (Irrigation) Department aware of the fact that there occurred some breaches in the Gumti embankment during the last rains causing serious damage to crops in the vast tract of land, north of the Gumti?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) All the breaches occurred in the non-Government portion of the embankment, i.e., portions falling within the zemindary estates. Most of the breaches were closed by the local people with financial assistance from Government. Steps were also taken by the Collector for helping the distressed people by giving them agricultural loans.

The abolition of the Gumti embankment as an effective measure for the prevention of flood has been under consideration for some time. But this will let in water and submerge a vast paddy area much earlier than now. The engineers of the Department do not recommend this course until a suitable substitute crop, either early *aus* paddy or deep-water *aman*, can be suggested for the area. The Director of Agriculture who was consulted in the matter can suggest neither. Moreover, the immediate effect of the removal of the embankment is the formation of spill channels and the damaging of crops. At the present moment when the maintenance of food production is imperative a scheme which is likely to have a contrary effect cannot be proceeded with. In these circumstances the only alternative is to ensure protection against high and abnormal flood and this has already engaged the attention of my department.

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: With reference to answer (*b*) where it is stated, "Most of the breaches were closed by the local people with financial assistance from Government," will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the officials of the Irrigation Department at Comilla prohibit the local people from closing the breaches?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid I cannot answer the question from the materials in front of me.

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that a prosecution has been started under section 143, Indian Penal Code, for closing the breaches in the embankment at a place near Companyganj?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: No, I am not aware of it. In the answer I have said, "the only alternative is to ensure protection against high and abnormal flood" and my honourable friend's question is directed towards that end. I shall cause enquiries to be made.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what was the amount that was paid by Government by way of financial assistance for closing the breaches?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am speaking from memory—about Rs. 4,000.

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many breaches occurred during the last rains in the embankment?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information is not in front of me.

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the length of the non-Government portion of the embankment?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information is not available.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what was the total expenditure that was incurred for closing the breaches?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: From the information placed at my disposal, I am unable to answer the question. If my honourable friend desires the information, certainly the information will be made available to him.

Cess certificate cases in the district of Pabna.

***203. Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of cess certificate cases (for which sale proclamations were issued) pending at the close of the last financial year in the district of Pabna—

(1) for want of bidders, and

(2) for other causes;

(*ii*) the number of such cases of the current year pending up to the 31st January, 1943,—

(1) for want of bidders, and

(2) for some other causes?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps he is considering to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*)(*i*) (1) 46.

(2) 193.

(*ii*) No sale proclamation was issued in the certificate cases filed during the current year up to the 31st January, 1943.

(*b*) It will depend upon the circumstances of each case.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: With reference to answers (*a*)(*i*)(*1*) and (*2*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many of these cases are still pending?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information is not available. If my friend insists on that information, it will be made available to him.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the amount of public demand in respect of these two categories of cases?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information also is not available.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what number of cases have been filed during the current year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information also is not available.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Then what are you here for?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May I know, Sir, if there is any information available from the file of the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Remission of Khasmahal rents in Faridpur district.

***204. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) With reference to the reply given to starred question No. 10 on the 12th February, 1943, and No. 63 on the 28th September, 1942, and supplementaries thereunder, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that sufferings in these five years have brought the people to a state of economic helplessness?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of remitting rents for khasmahal lands for the current year and the year to come to enable the people to rehabilitate their position to some extent in those areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) There was some distress in limited areas of the district during the last 4 years. This year, however, the condition of the people in some parts of the district has become worse on account of failure of the last *aus* and *aman* crops.

(*b*) The question is under examination. Meanwhile no pressure is being put for the realisation of current rents.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is meant by current rent? Does it mean that pressure is being put for the realisation of rents of previous quarters or of previous years in arrear?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not think so.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when we can expect Government to take a decision on the question which is now under examination?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, since the answer as printed was sent to the Assembly Department the position, I am told, has deteriorated and the examination is being conducted with the utmost expedition possible and it is expected that a decision will be taken before the Budget Session is over.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that the entire *aus* and *aman* paddy has failed in the subdivisions of Faridpur and Goalundo this year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not agree with the suggestion of the honourable member about the failure of the crop in its entirety, but, as I have already stated, there has been a failure.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*), namely, that the condition of the people in some parts of the district has become worse on account of the failure of the last *aus* and *aman* crops, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there has been distress of a severe type in the Gopalganj and Madaripur subdivisions?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall make enquiries.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, that no pressure is being put for the realisation of current rents, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that for arrear rents pressure is being put for their realisation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not think so, but I shall be glad to have any specific information to that effect from my honourable friend, and if I find that it is so I shall certainly be prepared to consider the desirability of taking proper action.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the position with regard to the realisation of union board rates and cesses?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of holding an enquiry into the question of arrears of rent and stopping the realisation thereof where such realisations are being made?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already answered that question.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Wearing of shorts by police officers.

59. Dr. SANAULLAH: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that wearing of half pants (shorts) is compulsory for all officers of the (*i*) Bengal and (*ii*) Calcutta Police?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that by wearing half pants (shorts) the Muslim members of the police forces cannot perform their daily prayers?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of—

(*i*) changing the police uniform into a full pant as is being done in police forces of other provinces; and

(*ii*) making the wearing of half pants optional for Muslim officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) No, except for Assistant Sub-Inspectors, Head Constables and Constables in the Bengal Police, or men of the Armed Police force, in the Calcutta Police, when on duty.

(*b*) Yes, but police officers are not allowed to leave their duty to say their prayers.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that a Muslim has got to say his compulsory prayers during specified hours every day?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise; we all know that.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Sir, it arises out of answer (*b*) where it is stated——

Mr. SPEAKER: No, it does not arise. I have disallowed that question. Everybody knows that a Muslim has got to say compulsory prayers five times a day. So, no such question arises.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any Government order to that effect, viz., that a Muslim officer is not allowed to say his prayer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, there is no such Government order.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government is considering the desirability of allowing Muslim police officers to say their compulsory prayers even when they are on duty?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, up to now I have received no complaint from any Muslim police officer that he is in any way hampered in his attempt to say prayers regularly. If any complaint in this respect is received, I shall certainly look into the matter and pass orders that Muslim officers may say their prayers at the appointed time without interference.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that a police officer is not allowed to make any complaint to the Minister direct?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am aware of that, but he can certainly make his prayer known to me through his proper officer.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: In view of the categorical statement that police officers are not allowed to leave their duty to say prayers, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there are certain duties of the police which do not require constant vigilance and that they in the course of such duties can easily say their prayers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall be most happy to see the day when Muslims are as anxious to say their prayers as honourable members are anxious to put questions to me. (Laughter.) I shall however send for the Commissioner of Police and discuss the question with him and pass necessary orders so that no interference is made in future in the matter of Muslims saying their prayers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any exemption from public duty of Muslim officers or assistants, like the driver of a train, during prayer hours or when he is required to meet any emergency the policeman is allowed to sit down to say his prayer and allow looting and burning of houses and murders to take place?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Looting and burning, etc., do not take place during prayer time. (Laughter.)

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the nature of duty in which when an officer is engaged he is not allowed to say his prayer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As a matter of fact, I was not aware of insistent demand of this kind when the question was put. As I have stated, I shall send for the Commissioner of Police and discuss the matter with him. I have not the slightest doubt that he will take any objection to any arrangement that may be necessary to allow Muslims to say their prayers.

Family allowance for security prisoner Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A.

60. Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that security prisoner Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A., applied for family allowance on the 1st November, 1942;

(*ii*) that the petition of Mr. Kundu asking for such allowance was held up by the Home (Jails) Department for two months and a half in spite of repeated reminders by Mr. Kundu; and

(*iii*) that the Assistant Secretary to the Government of Bengal in his "Memorandum No. 349-H.J., dated the 15th January, 1943," asked the District Magistrate of Dinajpur for a report on the "correctness or otherwise of the statements of the applicant", etc.?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) The petition was held up for some time pending decision on an important question of policy.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*b*) I refer the honourable member to my reply to (*a*) (*ii*).

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer to (*a*)(*ii*) where it is stated that the petition of Mr. Kundu, asking for allowance, was held up for some time pending decision on an important question of policy, do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that the whole period of two months and a half was taken in disposing of petitions from ordinary prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a general question which does not arise out of the main question.

Transport lorries of factories.

61. Mr. DHIRENDRANATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Defence Co-ordination Department be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken to enable the factories to maintain the minimum fleet of lorries for transporting raw materials and finished goods by the issue of the requisite permits and allotment of petrol?

MINISTER in charge of the CIVIL DEFENCE CO-ORDINATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): The Area Rationing Authorities have been instructed to meet the reasonable requirements of transport vehicles engaged on Government, war or other essential work on being satisfied that the vehicles are actually engaged on essential work and that the petrol is consumed for the purpose for which it is given.

Due to the continued need for economy in consumption of petrol, however the use of alternative fuel and the conversion of petrol-driven vehicles into gas is encouraged, wherever possible, consistent with the maintenance of efficiency.

Filling up of the seats of the Jessore District Board.

62. Maulvi AZHAR ALI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of seats of the Jessore District Board that are lying vacant;

(*ii*) the cause of vacancy: and

(*iii*) the cause of non-filling?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when and how the seats are likely to be filled up?

MINISTER in charge of the LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*)(*i*) Four.

(*ii*) and (*iii*) The election of 5 members of the Jessore District Board by the Sadar Local Board having been challenged, the District Magistrate of Jessore set aside the election under section 18B of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act. Government then appointed 5 members in their place under section 10(*2*). But the appointment of these members by Government was declared *ultra vires* by the Hon'ble High Court. Meanwhile the Local Boards in the district of Jessore were abolished under section 36A of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act. The Sadar Local Board being no longer in existence, there is no constituency to elect the requisite number of members. Hence it has not been possible to hold any election under section 19 to fill up these vacancies. Government have also been advised that these vacancies cannot be filled up by appointment by Government.

One of the five members whose appointment by Government has been declared *ultra vires* having died before the Local Boards in the district of Jessore were abolished, his place was duly filled by the election of another member by the Sadar Local Board. This member continues to represent the Sadar subdivision on the District Board.

(*b*) These vacancies cannot be filled up at present. The Board will be reconstituted after delimitation of its constituencies in the manner prescribed in Chapter IA of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act read with the rules framed for election of members of District Boards on the abolition of Local Boards. The proposal for delimitation of constituencies for the Jessore District Board is under the consideration of Government.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Supply of kerosene oil in Brahmanbaria subdivision.

***96. Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware—

(*i*) that the people of Brahmanbaria subdivision, particularly of Kasba police-station in Tippera, have been experiencing difficulties due to inadequate supply of kerosene oil; and

(*ii*) that complaints have been made to the Subdivisional Officer of Brahmanbaria by the people of Unions of Mulagram, Badair and Dharkar, police-station Kasba, through an M.L.A. about realisation of extortionate prices by dealers of kerosene?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps does he propose to take in the matter?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Subdivisional Officer of Brahmanbaria has formulated different schemes at different times for the supply of kerosene oil in the subdivision?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these schemes had the approval of Government?

(*e*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that constant changes of schemes have aggravated the difficulties of the people.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Yes. Complaints of a general nature of profiteering were received but no specific complaint against any particular dealer was forthcoming.

(*b*) Owing to the international situation, supplies of oil available are now 50 per cent. of those available in 1941. Supplies available to the public have therefore had to be severely restricted. A scheme has recently been introduced by the Directorate which will ensure that the supplies of oil now available will be equitably distributed as between different classes of consumers.

(*c*) and (*d*) Pending the formulation of the above scheme, local officers were left to regulate distribution of kerosene within their jurisdiction as best they could.

(*e*) No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Does this scheme referred to in answer (*b*) apply to Brahmanbaria subdivision only or generally to all areas in which there is a shortage of supply of kerosene oil?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The scheme is a very big scheme. I find it is dated 23rd January, 1942. If my honourable friend desires to have a look at the scheme for the distribution of kerosene oil it will be made available.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What are the fundamental points of the scheme? Is it a fact that in this scheme discriminatory arrangement has been made in favour of Government officials and certain classes of priority consumers to whom about 50 per cent. of the local oil supply could be provided?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is a big question. If my honourable friend will split it up, I shall be glad to answer. But as I said the scheme will be made available.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of complaints of a general nature regarding profiteering in that subdivision received by him up till now?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no positive information as to the number of complaints in that subdivision, but I have been told that there were complaints in that subdivision. Some of the complaints have been enquired into and some prosecutions have been followed by convictions. That is what I have been told.

Rise in price and transport of essential articles.

***97. Maulvi MD. ABUL FAZL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether he is aware that prices of all the foodstuffs and the clothings have been on the increase for the last 6 months?

(*b*) If so, what steps, if any, Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any steps have been taken by Government for easy transportation of essential articles between the districts of Bengal and outside in view of the prevailing distress in this Province?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) All possible steps have been and are being taken to prevent profiteering and bring down prices having regard to the supply position and cost of production of each commodity.

(*c*) The importance of maintaining transport of essential articles as far as possible uninterrupted has been repeatedly impressed on the Government of India.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the price of rice in Calcutta has been rising ever since this answer was drafted and what is the price today per maund of rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This particular answer was drafted on the 24th February, 1943. Since then there has been a further rise in the price of rice in Calcutta.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what good can he expect to derive by answering a question the answer to which was drafted on the 24th February, 1943, and whether he is not aware of the fact that prices of rice and other commodities have been rising in an extraordinary degree since that date and what attempts have been made to bring down prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot answer so many questions at a time.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: My question is, what is the good of giving some answer which was drafted as early as the 24th February, 1943?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sen, you know that these questions were held over. Therefore that question does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, in that case may I submit through you to the Hon'ble Minister that he may be pleased to give a correct up-to-date answer tomorrow or the day after?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as these held-over questions are concerned, I was not present in the House last night when the Hon'ble Speaker ordered that the questions would be answered tonight, but I made an appeal to him that these questions may be held over for some little time yet for me to revise the replies. But so far the answers for tonight are concerned, I have taken the trouble to revise the replies. I shall be glad to answer questions which my honourable friend will be pleased to put to me.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were the steps that were taken, as he has said that all possible steps were taken to stop profiteering and bring down prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Without disrespect to the questioner and without disrespect to the Minister concerned, the question was too broad and the answer has been too vague. But if my honourable friend desires to have a statement, that is a different thing. Within the scope of the supplementary question it will be very difficult for any Minister to give an account of the steps which have been taken so far.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that even today the surreptitious removal of goods is going on by boats and other means of transport?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware, but if my honourable friend will give me specific information I can assure him that action will be taken.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to the answer that steps have been taken to prevent profiteering, is the Government aware that the recent decontrol order has helped profiteering inasmuch as those who had stock on hand before the date of decontrol were given an opportunity of selling that stock at enormously high prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend is a staunch supporter of control!

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes. It has been stated that all possible steps have been taken to stop profiteering. I would like to know if Government is aware that on the contrary the steps taken by Government have led to profiteering.

Mr. SPEAKER: That was after this answer was drafted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is also well known. Will the Hon'ble Minister redraft the answer if he likes?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has said that he would revise the replies.

(Before unstarred questions Nos. 27 and 28 were called.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Banerjee, are you prepared to answer questions Nos. 27 and 28?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as these questions are concerned, I am prepared to answer except that with regard to No. 28 I have revised the answer. So with your permission I shall read out the revised answer to unstarred question No. 28.

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Supply of rations to the workers of the Bengal Government Press.

27. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Director of Civil Supplies failed to supply sufficient rations for the employees of the Bengal Government Press, Alipore, as requested by the Superintendent, Bengal Government Press;

(*ii*) that the materials supplied to the Bengal Government Press by the Civil Supplies Department were charged at higher price than the "Black Market" or almost equal to it;

(*iii*) that the qualities of the materials such as mustard oil and others supplied for the employees of the Bengal Government Press are deplorably bad?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have so far been taken or proposed to be taken by Government to improve the quantity and quality of the rations and to reduce the prices thereof? If not, why not?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*)(*i*) No.

The Bengal Government Press reported 850 men (638 rice-eating, 212 *atta*-eating) whose monthly requirements at the approved rates of rations amount to—

	Maunds.
Rice	240
Atta	106
Dal	64
Mustard oil	21
Sugar	42

Against these requirements, they have been supplied since the last week of December (1½ months)—

	Maunds.	
Rice	394	
Atta	102	
Dal	26	Though none was asked for.
Mustard oil	6	

Thus more rice was actually supplied than the Press required.

(*ii*) It is not known what price Bengal Government Press actually paid for the supplies. But delivery orders enforcible under the Defence of India Rules were issued to supply at the following rates fixed by Government:—

	Per maund. Rs.	a.
Rice—Coarse	9	10
Medium	10	10
Fine	12	10
Dal—Musur	12	4
Arhar	13	2
Chhola	11	6
Kalai	12	11
Khesari	10	1
Atta—	8	6
(one supply only at Rs. 19 fixed due to special reasons).		

Mustard oil—Mill No. 1 Rs. 27 and Mill No. 2 Rs. 24-4 as.

"Black Market" rates were at this time very much higher than these prices.

(*iii*) No complaint has been received from the Bengal Government Press regarding quality.

(*b*) The question does not arise.

(No. 28 was then called.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We would be very much delighted if the revised answer is given now so that there may be no necessity for holding over the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the question hour is over this question (No. 28) will stand over.

Held-over question.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May I submit, Sir, that one question of mine has been held over, and it has not yet been answered? It has

reference to a cut motion of mine which I am going to move. It would have been better if the question had been answered. I refer to the Police Poor Box Fund. The question was not adequately replied and so the question has been held over. As the Police Demand is coming up tomorrow, it would be better if it could be answered before that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will remember your request. Secretary will see that it comes up tomorrow.

Point of Privilege.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of procedure, propriety and privilege. Should not the Hon'ble Minister in charge of General Administration take his seat instead of conversing with Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Why are you jealous of me? The European Party is with you; you need not be nervous.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order, Sir. The Minister is in the House and is supposed to attend to the proceedings of the House wherever he may be. He need not stick to the Treasury Benches.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am glad to hear this in answer to Mr. Suhrawardy. (Laughter.)

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am sure you will not uphold the point of order. As it has been the convention in this House, the Minister, when he is dealing with a particular subject, must remain in his seat and if Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has got any business he should come up to the Hon'ble Minister instead of the other way about. (Laughter.)

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

25—General Administration—General Administration.

(The debate on the demand for grant under the head "25—General Administration—General Administration" was then resumed.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this to raise a discussion on the suppression of the Press and the control exercised over the dissemination of correct news and independent views by newspapers.

Sir, my motion is self-explanatory. Hardly any speech is necessary to bring home to the members of this House and to the Government how very keenly we feel that civil liberty is being trampled down by this ruthless action on the Press in the country. Sir, not long ago we had the debate on the food situation in this House and as was then pointed out a fiat was issued from the Secretariat that even the debate in this House regarding the food situation would have to be submitted first to the Press Adviser before that could be permitted to be published. That takes our breath away. To what extent the rigours of Press control have come to this province passes our imagination.

Sir, I will not take much time of the House. The number of cases, the number of instances in which the Press obtains warnings, secret as well as open, and the manner in which editors of papers are from time to time penalised and threatened are too well known. Even in matters in which other provinces have found it possible to permit publication of news emanating from this province, the very enthusiastic Press Adviser of Bengal has prevented the public of Bengal from knowing the real facts. In the case, for example, Sir, of the letter that was addressed by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee some time ago to the Governor of Bengal when he tendered his resignation, the Press of Bengal was not permitted to publish *in extenso* the letter which he addressed, although that letter was published by the Press in Delhi, in Bombay and in other parts of India. Sir, we have had also reports and this was not contradicted, that even information about dire calamities, natural calamities like the Midnapore cyclone and the like were suppressed for reasons best known to the bureaucracy. More so, Sir, we have also heard that recently no information is permitted to be published regarding the food situation in various parts of Bengal in various districts and the sufferings of the people due to shortage of food, possibly because that is likely to create disaffection towards the present order of things.

Sir, I was told that there were some time ago certain arrangements between the Press and the Government regarding the manner in which the control to be exercised over the Press should be exercised. That machinery which was instituted has practically completely broken down. The Press Advisory Committee of the journalists hardly ever gets information, and the committee's opinion is hardly ever sought when the Government choose to suppress any information or choose to penalise any particular Press for having inadvertently published something in good faith.

That being the situation today, Sir, we feel that the position of the country has been reduced to that of a country controlled or dominated by nothing short of Nazi rule. Goebbels' methods cannot in any way be considered to be worse than the methods adopted by the local bureaucrats here, and we want a definite reply as to the policy that the present Government is pursuing in the matter of control over the Press and the manner in which they propose to permit the views of the Press and, in particular, the news in the Press to be published. I have grievance both as regards the suppression of news as well as with regard to views. Barring the question of views which may or may not be a matter of so much grievance, as in some cases during war time we may not insist that the Press be permitted to disseminate a kind of view which may create panic or lead to further deterioration in the emergent conditions of the province, but, Sir, with regard to the publication of news we are definitely of the opinion that suppression of news or dissemination of incorrect news or partially correct news is the worst form of propaganda which creates greater disaffection, which creates more want of faith in the administration than even what the foreign propagandists can do either over the radio or otherwise.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion for such suitable reply as the Chief Minister may deem it necessary to give us.

Mr. JAGAT CHANDRA MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the want of proper control over the appointing authorities in their observing the Bengal Services Recruitment (Communal Ratio) Rules, 1940, at the time of their making appointments.

Sir, the communal ratio rules with regard to the scheduled castes were totally ignored and the interests of the scheduled castes and other minority communities were not at all safeguarded by the present Ministry and the administration of the present Ministry is a total failure. The Ministry, when it was first formed, boasted to be a national Ministry and the people of the province expected that the Cabinet would create a healthy atmosphere in the country, so that the people may realise that they are in a régimé of their own under Provincial Autonomy and that His Majesty's servants also would be made to realise that they are public servants and are there for looking after the interests of the public and not to lord over the public, but to our utter mortification, as admitted by the Hon'ble Premier and his former colleague the Hon'ble ex-Finance Minister in his statement, "Why I resigned", it appears that the Ministry has utterly failed in their bounden duties and responsibilities to the country. And ultimately it turned out to be a mere farce, a misnomer, in the name of provincial autonomy. They pretended to be "national" outwardly only in garb, but they are self-aggrandising and bureaucrat in spirit and action. As, for instance, one of the Ministers admitted that he had appointed a matriculate son of his as Sub-Registrar, for which post a scheduled caste graduate got the first nomination from the Chittagong Division. Another has made his brother a munsif not in the first or second batch, but in the 3rd batch, and some of the supporters of the present Ministry are now doing contract business in rice, sugar, etc. In this way they are doing self-building business instead of nation-building works.

Sir, another marvellous achievement of the so-called National Ministry is the curtailment of a scheduled caste member of the Cabinet, although some scheduled caste aspirants for ministership, leaving aside their household duties, have been worshipping faithfully the Hon'ble Premier and his colleagues as the Goddess of Fortune, Lakshmi, but unfortunately without any remuneration for their heartfelt devotion and worship, and they are like motherless children treated with step-motherly treatment by the Cabinet, and instead of giving milk they are throwing cold water on them, and instead of giving them food they are giving them stones. So I would request my friends to remember the saying— "ভিক্ষায়াং নৈবচ নৈবচ" For, what is your legitimate right, you cannot get by begging but by being united.

Sir, this is the sixth year of provincial autonomy, the present communal representation being introduced as a result of the present Constitution. During the régimé of the previous Communal Ministry the interests of all the different communities were legitimately served according to their proper shares in the administration of the country and no such piteous cry was

raised by the previous Communal Ministry as is being done by the present National Ministry who are crying loudly for some time past through the newspapers that under the directions of His Excellency the Governor his coterie, the officials, do not carry out their orders and act according to their advice, and so they cannot do justice to the people of the country. The Hon'ble ex-Finance Minister having a strong sense of self-respect has said in his statement "Why I resigned": "There were circumstances which rendered it impossible for me to continue in office consistent with my self-respect." He was praised for his resignation. We fail to understand how his other colleagues, specially the Chief Minister, could continue in office consistent with their self-respect. Are there different degrees of self-respect with regard to different Ministers? Our congratulations upon those Ministers who are still continuing in their offices under circumstances stated by the Hon'ble ex-Finance Minister.

With these few words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

The object of my motion is to raise a discussion on the repressive measures adopted in the Balurghat subdivision of Dinajpur district since August, 1942.

Sir, my task has been rendered easy——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of order, Sir. I only wish to be enlightened if the Hon'ble Chief Minister will be able to deal, within the time at his disposal, with the various points of the cut motions which have been raised by Dr. Sanyal alone, leaving aside the points which have been raised by other members. For instance, the very first motion which Dr. Sanyal has moved is of such tremendous importance that to deal with that alone it will require a considerable amount of time for the Hon'ble Chief Minister. So, is it worth while moving other cut motions when we are certain that the Chief Minister has no intention of replying to any of them?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, how do you know the intention of others?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There is no time, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That you may say, but I will try to give the Leaders as much time as I can possibly spare. That is my desire. I think it may be necessary even to prolong the sitting for some time.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Let the Chief Minister tell us whether he intends to reply to the points raised in the cut motions of Dr. Sanyal.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will see afterwards.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, in moving this motion I also do feel as my friend Mr. Suhrawardy does that it is not probably possible for the Hon'ble Chief Minister to deal with all my cut motions, particularly some of the very important motions raising big questions of principle and policy, straightaway in this House within the short compass of even half an hour's time. But what I do feel is that it is through our cut motions that not merely the attention of the Cabinet but also of this House and the country is drawn to certain important matters to which we have to draw public attention. We also feel that these motions will be duly taken note of by the departmental officers and Government will have time after the Budget Session is over to ruminate over these motions and find out how many of these have raised issues of a very important character that need proper enquiry or investigation into. (Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: You don't want reply today?) We do but it may not be possible. That does not matter.

Sir, with regard to the Balurghat subdivision, I have had my task made easy through a question put by my esteemed friend Mr. Ashutosh Lahiry in course of supplementaries to which the Hon'ble Chief Minister only this morning had virtually admitted that there were certain instances which require further investigation and enquiry.

Sir, I have some embarrassment in this connection. Although the matters that have been brought to my notice are atrocious, some of them at the present moment are under judicial investigation as various cases have been instituted in courts of law at Balurghat either from the police side or against the perpetrators of certain wrongs. I, therefore, do not want to deal with this question in detail. But, generally speaking, I would like to acquaint the House with this fact that in the name of maintaining law and order or, possibly, as some of the British bureaucrats thought, in the name of reconquering the independent subdivision of Balurghat as it had passed out of British control, they perpetrated things which no civilized administration could ever think of. The District Magistrate, the Commissioner of the Division, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police and all the officials, local and otherwise, collected there with a large number of armed police and Gurkha soldiers and they remained in the *dâk* bungalow for no less than about a week and carried on systematic repression and vandalism. They had at their instance houses burnt and razed to the ground, property looted with the help of hooligans, and the villagers were practically reduced to the state of starvation and abject penury because of the acts supposed to have been perpetrated by some of them. I invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to this state of affairs, and I would claim that even if some persons had done something wrong it was no business of the officials of Government, including the Divisional Commissioner, to come and create mass terrorism. It is not expected of these officers that they should come and create terroristic activities themselves.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to speak something in support of this motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can do that after the other cut motions have been moved.

Mr. Gupta, if you want to speak on the policy you may do so after the motions have been moved.

Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the policy of Government in ignoring the legitimate rights and claims of the scheduled castes in the matter of their representation on local bodies such as district boards, municipalities, district school boards, local boards, etc.

Sir, বঙ্গীয় স্বায়ত্তশাসন আইন বাংলাকে যে সুযোগ সুবিধা দিয়েছে, বাংলার তপশীল সম্প্রদায় সে সব সুবিধা সুযোগ হতে আজও সম্পূর্ণভাবে বঞ্চিত রয়েছে। বাংলাদেশে এমন কোন জেলা নেই, এমন কোন মহকুমা নেই, এমন কোন থানা বা Union নেই যেখানে District Board, District School Board, Municipality, Local Board বা Union Boardএ তপশীল সম্প্রদায় তাদের সংখ্যানুপাতে তাদের ন্যায্য দাবী বা ন্যায্য পাওনা যে আসন তা প্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। মনে হয় যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের একটা policy, একটা নীতি হয়ে দাড়িয়েছে যে তারা এই চিরকাল উপেক্ষিত বঞ্চিত, প্রপীড়িত ও নিষ্পেষিত জাতিকে সর্ব্ব দিক দিয়ে এমনি করে উপেক্ষিত করে রেখে দেবে। স্বায়ত্তশাসন দ্বারা বা ভারত-শাসন আইনের বলে যে সংস্কার কিছুটা হয়েছে বা যে সব সুযোগ সুবিধা হয়েছে, সেই সব থেকে যেন তপশীল জাতিকে চিরকাল বঞ্চিত করে রাখা হবে, এই যেন তাদের একটা নীতি হয়ে দাড়িয়েছে। Union Boardএর কথা বলতে পারি, যেখানে হিন্দুর সংখ্যার তিন-চতুর্থাংশ তপশীল সম্প্রদায় সেখানেও তপশীল জাতি গভর্ণমেণ্টের nomination পায় না; বর্ণ হিন্দু এক-চতুর্থাংশ হয়েও পায়। District Boardএ যেখানে অধিকাংশ পথকর তপশীল সম্প্রদায় দিয়ে থাকে বা District Board fundএ বহুল পরিমাণ টাকা দিয়ে থাকে, সেখানেও এই সুযোগ সুবিধা তারা পায় না। District School Board—যেখানে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা প্রবর্ত্তন করা যে বোর্ডের কাজ; সকলেই জানেন যে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা তপশীল জাতির পক্ষে কতটা প্রয়োজন এবং এই শিক্ষা বিস্তারকল্পে তপশীল জাতির দান নিতান্ত কম নয়, যেখানে তারা নানা দুঃখ, দারিদ্র্যের ভিতর দিয়েও তাদের পুত্রকন্যাগণকে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা প্রদান করবার জন্য তারা স্কুল প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছে—কিন্তু যে Board এই স্কুল পরিচালনা করবে সেই Boardএ তাদের কোন সদস্য স্থান পায় না; গভর্ণমেণ্ট nomination দ্বারা সেই Boardএ তাদের একটী সদস্যও মনোনয়ন করেন না। এই যে নীতি, এই গভর্ণমেণ্টের অধীনে সেটা আরও উজ্জ্বল হয়ে উঠেছে। এর কারণ কি? এর কারণ—ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী একজন গণতন্ত্রের অগ্রদূত বলে আমার মনে হয়। Speaker মহোদয় আপনিও এক দিন স্বায়ত্তশাসনের ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী ছিলেন। আমরা সেই সময় স্বস্তির নিশ্বাস ফেলেছিলাম। এবং অতি অল্প দিনের ভিতর আপনি আমাদের সেই আশা খানিকটা সফল প্রমাণিত করেছিলেন। কিন্তু আজ এই গণতন্ত্রের অগ্রদূত ও বিপ্লবী যারা, তাদের হাতে পড়ে আমাদের কি দুর্দ্দশা হয়েছে সে কথা কি আর বলব। মনে হয়, এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী যে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী হিন্দু মহাসভা বা হিন্দু সভার নেতাদের দ্বারা পরিচালিত সেই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী চায়, তপশীল জাতিকে সর্ব্বদিক দিয়ে বঞ্চিত করে রাখবে,

তাদিগকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে দেবে, তাদিগকে সুযোগ সুবিধা হতে চিরকাল দূরে সরিয়ে রাখবে যে রকম করে তারা বিল অঞ্চলে, অনুন্নত স্থানে বসতি করতে ছিল। লেখাপড়া ও অন্যান্য সকল বিষয়ে যেমন তারা পশ্চাৎপদ ছিল, তেমনি পশ্চাৎপদ করে যেন তাদের চিরকাল রেখে দেবে। Speaker মহোদয় বড় দুঃখের সহিত, অতি অপ্রিয় হলেও, কয়েকটী সত্য কথা আমাকে বল্‌তে হচ্ছে। এই সরকার তাদের ১৬ মাস শাসনের ফলে বাংলার তপশীল জাতির মনে যে আশঙ্কা জাগ্রত করেছে, সে আশঙ্কা কিছুতেই নিরসন হবে না। আমরা ভেবেছিলাম যে এমন একটা মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী হয়েছে যে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী সকল community, সকল সম্প্রদায়, বিশেষতঃ যারা পশ্চাৎপদ সম্প্রদায়, তাদের স্বার্থের প্রতি অধিকতর সহানুভূতিসম্পন্ন হবেন কিন্তু কার্য্য-ক্ষেত্রে দেখতে পাচ্ছি প্রথমেই তারা আরম্ভ করলেন এই যে একটা বড় চাকরি থেকে আমাদিগকে বঞ্চিত করলেন—২,৫০০ টাকার চাকরি থেকে বঞ্চিত করলেন এবং উদার হিন্দু মহাসভার নেতৃ-বৃন্দ ও অত্যন্ত উদার অন্তঃকরণ বিশিষ্ট হক সাহেব, একত্র যুক্তি করে, ষড়যন্ত্র করে এটা ঠিক করলেন। শুনেছি, তার ভাণ্ড দয়া, মমতা, সহানুভূতিতে পরিপূর্ণ কিন্তু সেটা একেবারেই নিঃশেষ হল scheduled casteএর বেলায়। বিশেষ করে, নমঃশূদ্র সম্প্রদায়কে দুর্ব্বল করে দেওয়াই বোধ হয় আজ হক সাহেবের কর্ত্তব্য হয়ে দাড়িয়েছে। আর তার উপদেষ্টা হচ্ছেন ডাঃ শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জি। অত্যন্ত দুঃখের বিষয় আমার নেতা শ্রীযুক্ত শরৎ চন্দ্র বসুর অনুবর্ত্তিগণ আজ এমন করে scheduled casteএর স্বার্থের প্রতি উপেক্ষাপরায়ণ ও উদাসীন হতে পারেন। দুঃখের সহিত বল্‌তে হয় আজ তারা ওখানে বসে থাকার আর যোগ্য নয়। শুধু office পাওয়ার লোভে, লাভের ভাগ বাটোয়ারা পেয়ে সমস্ত উদ্দেশ্য ও আদর্শ ভুলে গিয়ে শুধু ঐ মন্ত্রিত্বের গদি পোষণ করে চলেছেন—এ ছাড়া যেন কোন কর্ত্তব্য তাদের নেই। আমি অনুরোধ করছি ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী মহোদয়কে তিনি যেন আমাদের কোন কথা শোনেন না; আমাদের কোন কথায় ভ্রূক্ষেপ করেন না। তিনি তপশীল জাতির মধ্যে নিতান্ত অযোগ্য লোককে বেছে বেছে চাকরীতে nomination দেন। সেখানে তপশীল জাতির অযোগ্য লোক এনে, তাদের হাতের পুতুল করে দেখাতে চান যে আমরা তপশীল জাতির প্রতি সহানুভূতিসম্পন্ন। তপশীল জাতির মধ্যে যারা যোগ্য আছে, ব্যক্তিত্বসম্পন্ন আছে, তাদের কোন স্থান দিতে চান না। এর উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে, যেন তপশীল জাতির অস্তিত্ব তারা লোপ করে দিতে চান। মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী, বিশেষ করে আমাদের প্রধান মন্ত্রীর কাছে আমি আবেদন জানাচ্ছি তিনি যেন এই অপরাধে এই ষড়যন্ত্রে লিপ্ত না হন। তপশীল জাতির অস্তিত্ব তার অস্তিত্বের জন্য প্রয়োজন আছে। একথা মুসলমান সম্প্রদায় বোঝে। বর্ণ হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় চায়, তাদের ধুয়ে মুছে একেবারে শেষ করে দিতে কিন্তু মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের সে উদ্দেশ্য হওয়া উচিত নয়। যত অত্যাচারই হিন্দুর উপর থেকে আসুক, তপশীল জাতি বাঁচতে চায়, বাঁচবে—অত্যাচারের মুখেও তারা বাঁচবে; কেহ তাদের মুছে ফেলতে পারবে না। তারা বাঁচবে—বাঁচতে তারা বদ্ধপরিকর। আজ কংগ্রেস বলে, আমরা তপশীল জাতির বন্ধু; বর্ণ হিন্দু বলে, তোমরা তপশীল কিসে, তোমরা ত হিন্দু। কিন্তু হিন্দু বল্‌লেই হিন্দু হয় না। তোমরা ভাগের বেলায় সব; আর মুখে হিন্দু বলে তাদিগকে উচ্চ আসনে বসাও।

Sir, আপনাকে যথেষ্ট ধন্যবাদ; আমাকে যথেষ্ট সময় দিয়েছেন। আমাদিগকে সকলেই বঞ্চিত করেন। আপনি অন্ততঃ তা করবেন না।

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussio n the policy of Government in removing the heads of local bodies having affiliation to the Muslim League and superseding local bodies.

Sir, when the present Ministry came into office fifteen months back, they were in a minority but as soon as they came into power they manœuvred to turn that minority into a majority and they succeeded, but the majority which they enjoyed in the Legislature was not reflected in the country outside. Sir, the Ministers and the party behind the Ministry think that unless they can remove the Muslim League members from local bodies and unless they can capture the local institutions they will not be able to make any headway in securing a majority following in the province. They were wrong in thinking that the position of the Muslim League depended upon the influence they commanded with the local bodies. However, they came to that conclusion and decided that by hook or by crook, by foul means or fair means the position occupied by the Muslim League members in local bodies should be weakened. At that time there were no less than 13 Muslim League chairmen of district boards out of 16 Muslim chairmen. So they carried on a campaign of vendetta and gradually step by step they started to remove the chairmen of district boards. The reasons they advanced were very flimsy and without any foundation. They brought charges which they could not substantiate and they took recourse to a very vague excuse, viz., persistent negligence. This is a very vague expression, but it was sufficient for Government to use as a handle in order that they might remove the chairmen of district boards without assigning any definite reason. Sir, the latest instance is that of the Dacca District Board. In this board there is a chairman who belongs to the Muslim League Parliamentary Party of this House. He is in a sufficient majority, and the majority is, I think, more than two-thirds; I think 33 to 11. There is a party in opposition. As soon as the present Ministry came into office, the minority party in opposition consisting of 11 members sent a representation to the Government making all sorts of frivolous allegations, and the Government at that time asked the District Magistrate to submit a report and the District Magistrate submitted a report. After receiving the report —we do not know what the context of the report was or what were the recommendations of the local official—Government in the Department of Local Self-Government served a notice on the Dacca District Board to show cause why it should not be superseded. The grounds are very flimsy. I will cite the grounds. There are only six charges.

The first is the huge size of the sub-committees appointed by the board and the consequent expenditure from the district fund for payment of unnecessary travelling allowances.

The second item is the improper appointment of a typist which was made not on merit, but in order to please one of the chairman's supporters in the board.

The third item is the appointment of Maulvi Yakub Molla as the President of the Ghior Union Board in total disregard of the wishes of the majority of the members of the union board.

The fourth item is the holding of the ordinary and the budget meetings of the board on different dates, within one week of each other, and the consequent unnecessary expenditure from the district fund on travelling allowances.

The fifth item is that at the budget meeting held on the 31st March, 1942, provisions involving large sums of money were made for several new roads and projects without any plans or estimates being prepared, and projects, the expenditure on which was curtailed in a previous meeting of the district board for paucity of funds, were totally omitted. The budget meeting was a travesty of democratic practice and the chairman's party's handling of the affair was undignified, selfish, irresponsible and utterly opposed to the board's best interests. Personal interest and interest of the few were allowed to override the interests of the people.

The last item is that the election of a member of the Provincial Legislature as the second vice-chairman of the board whose chairman and vice-chairman are both members of the Legislature, was not in the best interests of the board and indicates the majority party's utter disregard of public interests as well as the interests of the board.

Sir, you will please note and the House will note that nowhere there is any allegation of mismanagement or inefficiency or maladministration. The charges are very flimsy, and these charges can be applied more appropriately to the Government than to the board.

I shall deal with the points item by item.

The first item refers to the huge size of the sub-committees appointed by the district board and the consequent expenditure from the district board fund for payment of unnecessary travelling allowances. In this connection I refer to the Government's payment of travelling allowances to the Progressive Party members. Sir, against all rules, against audit objections and against all existing principles the Government have paid travelling allowances to members of the Progressive Party to attend a party meeting. That is the charge which I level against the Government.

The second charge—item No. 2—is of a similar character—the appointment of a typist not on merit but in order to please one of the chairman's supporters in the board. Sir, I know of the appointment of the son of a Minister and the nephew of a Minister, both not having the requisite minimum qualifications, as Sub-Registrars, and the argument advanced by the Minister was that the family of the Minister has been loyal to seven generations of British kings. That was the answer given to a supplementary question by the Hon'ble Minister himself. Here the Government charges the Dacca Board with the allegation that the appointment is made not on merit. I ask you whether the appointment made on the ground that the family has been loyal to seven generations of British kings is an appointment on merit?

I next come to item No. 3, where the Government says that a president of a union board has been appointed against the wishes of the majority of the members. As against this I ask the Government to explain why a

gentleman, an outsider, has been appointed a chairman of the district board against the wishes of the majority of the board. The majority of the board submitted a petition to the District Magistrate protesting against the appointment. Against all canons of democracy, against all principles, an outsider who does not even possess the requisite franchise qualification has been appointed a chairman of the district board.

As regards item No. 4 relating to ordinary and budget meetings, I ask Government to explain why no meeting was held on the 9th. The reason is obvious, because they wanted the members of their party to get travelling allowances twice. That is why in spite of the most important subject, viz., a discussion of the food problem, it was postponed on the 9th.

As regards item No. 5, *i.e.*, the holding of the budget meeting on the 31st March, making provisions without plans or estimates, I ask Government to explain why a provision of a lakh of rupees for promotion of communal harmony was made last year in the budget without any policy. Without any policy and without any scheme they have provided money and they have not been able to spend the money. They have themselves admitted that they propose to spend only Rs. 15,000 if they can prepare a scheme before the 31st March, and they have promised that a scheme will be prepared and placed. This is the 24th March and yet, Sir, one lakh of rupees was provided without any project. There are many similar instances, but I only ask Government to explain this item.

As regards the last item, election of a member of the Provincial Legislature as the second vice-chairman of the board, is there any provision in the Local Self-Government Act where a member of the Legislature is debarred from being elected? He has been elected by at least a majority of the members, and I believe he has been elected unanimously without any opposition and still the Government says why a member of the Provincial Legislature has been appointed. The Government themselves are appointing members, they are distributing patronage, and they are taking recourse to political jobbery by giving all sorts of jobs and yet they have the audacity, they have the cheek to ask the district board for an explanation. I submit that it is a most atrocious act on the part of Government to contemplate taking such drastic steps against an autonomous self-governing institution. If the board is to be superseded on such a flimsy ground, I ask why the Ministry should not be superseded and dismissed.

Sir, you have been kind to extend the time.

I would like categorical answers to all the charges that I have levelled against the Government.

I have only mentioned about the District Board of Dacca. As regards the question of the removal of chairmen of other district boards, I think my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan will move another cut motion where he will give the details of those cases.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(*After adjournment.*)

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no other cut motion to be moved. All the cut motions as well as the original demand for grant are now open to discussion.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: There was one cut motion by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is covered already. He may speak.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, may I be permitted to make some observations on Mr. Hirtzel's cut motion as regards municipalities?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a point which will come later on.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to move the motion that stands in my name, but I only want to engage the attention, serious attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the acute situation that has arisen out of the shortage of rice in the district of Chittagong. This will have serious repercussions on the maintenance of law and order. Sir, I got a report on the 20th from my own men to the effect that rice was not available even at Rs. 40 per maund. My own men purchased rice on the 18th or 19th at one seer a rupee. They said that for two days they remained without rice. That is a fact, and on the 22nd I got news from my friend Mr. Nur Ahmed, M.L.C., of the Bengal Legislative Council who was the ex-Chairman of the Municipality for about 25 or 26 years to the same effect that rice was not available in the Chittagong town at Re. 1 and even Rs. 2 per seer. It might have been that somewhere rice was sold at 1½ seer or 1¼ seer per rupee, but the fact remains that this scarcity of rice has arisen after decontrol was promulgated in the district. Before I left Chittagong I found rice selling at Rs. 14 to Rs. 17 in market (medium rice), and I had an occasion to talk with the District Magistrate on this subject. He himself was worried over this problem as to how to feed the Chittagong town. Since then the situation has worsened and the present situation has arisen after the decontrol order was promulgated most probably after the 15th March. I have verified this abnormal scarcity of rice from one who is very reliable and who has just returned from Chittagong.

Sir, yesterday when I wanted to table an adjournment motion it was refused by the Speaker without hearing from me. Dr. Sanyal had the audacity to remark, when I was mentioning about my adjournment motion being refused consent, the statement of non-availability of rice even at Rs. 40 per maund in my adjournment motion explained by Mr. Shahabuddin as irresponsible. Sir, Dr. Sanyal is a Doctor of Economics, but he wants to be doctor of everything—doctor to the Chief Minister, doctor to other Ministers, to Speaker and to everything—even in spheres with which he is not well acquainted. He belongs to the constituency of Murshidabad, but he wants to poke his nose in the affairs of Chittagong. It may strike him as fiction as unheard of. I excuse my friend Dr. Sanyal on that ground, but it was his duty not to make such an irresponsible remark

against a member till he had heard from me. I do not want to make a reference to the whole career of Dr. Sanyal in this Assembly, but like my friend Dr. Sanyal I have never been asked to withdraw from the House for disobedience to the ruling of the Chair. Of course, he is a privileged man. When he was not in love with the Chief Minister, the Chief Minister used to remark that his activities were like the activities of an animal known for its mischievous pranks, the name of which I won't mention. The other day, the Revenue Minister described his feats to be acrobatic feats, and we know that half the time of this House is taken up by his interruptions which are sometimes sensical and sometimes nonsensical. Points of order are raised by him in the House every now and then. In spite of all these, he has got the privilege to rise at any moment. Now he has the willing ears of the Chief Minister and the Chief Minister is too willing to placate him. Whenever there is any question put by him, although the question is not allowed by the Speaker, he gives the answer and the Speaker allows this and also remarks made by him against our party. Of course, I am not so privileged as he is.

Sir, I have to mention all these things because I owe a responsibility to my district. I have got a letter saying that rice is now selling at Satkania miles off from town at 1½ seer per rupee and that is not available and there is a serious apprehension of a breach of the peace. People are not willing to take their rice from one house to another for fear of loot. I myself got a report the other day from my own village to the effect that people did not dare bring their rice to the town for fear of dacoity on the way. Sir, this is the situation there.

To save the situation, Sir, what has the Ministry done? Has anyone personally gone there to ascertain the affairs of Chittagong up to this time? The new Civil Supply Minister announced the other day in the Council that he would call a Conference of District Magistrates to discuss the affairs in the districts. But, Sir, that would be too late. At present I would request him to send down a man to personally see the local situation, to ascertain what difficulties people are experiencing—whether people are not going without rice for a number of days——

Mr. SPEAKER: Khan Bahadur, your time is up.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Please give me one or two minutes more.

Sir, this is the situation. The whole question depends on the policy of control or decontrol. But what steps have the Ministry taken? I do not know who is responsible for decontrol in my district. From a Government communiqué we know that in Calcutta Government have abolished control of the prices of rice. Whatever may be the effect of decontrol, we find that in Chittagong rice is not coming in the market. Government might have expected that as a result of decontrol rice would flow into the market from hidden quarters, but that expectation has not been fulfilled.

Sir, I have received information that the situation in Chittagong is very serious and it will take a long time to set up an Advisory Committee in the

district which the Civil Supply Minister wants to do. At the present moment what is he going to do to save the district? My own request on behalf of the people of Chittagong is that he should not keep Chittagong in the cold shade of neglect. Chittagong has suffered a good deal owing to the fall of Burma. It has also suffered terribly from the denial policy which was put into effect there in a ruthless manner.

Sir, it must be known to the Ministry that Chittagong is a deficit area. On account of the fact that Burma is the next door neighbour of Chittagong, lakhs of labourers from Chittagong used to earn their livelihood in Burma. These labourers used to work and live in Burma for six months, and so it was not known to the people of the district that Chittagong is a deficit district. But, now these labourers are confined to their own places and on the top of that evacuees in lakhs have come to Chittagong. Over and above that, there are thousands of troops in Chittagong. All these people are being fed from Chittagong rice. So, we can well imagine the sufferings that people are having there. These can better be imagined than described. In spite of successive air-raids from Burma, Chittagong has stood these raids calmly. Chittagong has contributed to a great extent to the efforts for the prosecution of war and if Chittagong is not saved by the supply of rice and by the supply of the bare necessities of life, Bengal will not be saved.

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister might think of introducing rationing in Calcutta in course of weeks, but the House must be aware from the "Chittagong Notes" published in the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" that rationing has already been introduced in Chittagong. I have also heard that rationing has already been introduced there.

Sir, the situation in Chittagong is very critical and I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to send an abundant supply of rice to Chittagong to save the situation.

Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED: Communal harmony, সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন সম্বন্ধে আমি দুই একটি কথা বলবো। সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলনের প্রয়োজনীয়তা ব্যাখ্যা করা নিষ্প্রয়োজন। আমাদের দেশের স্বাধীনতা কেবল-মাত্র সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলনেই আনতে সমর্থ। আমাদের অন্নবস্ত্রের সমস্যা, যত কিছু সমস্যা সব সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন সমাধান করতে সমর্থ। এক কথায় সভ্য দেশের, স্বাধীন সভ্য দেশের যা যা দরকার সমস্ত এ সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলনেই আনতে সমর্থ। পাকিস্থানও, সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন ছাড়া পাকিস্থান অসম্ভব। প্রথম সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন, পরে quit India লিখন, তা যদি মহাত্মা গান্ধী করতেন ত এতদিন হয়ে যেত। আমাদের নেতারা, হিন্দু-মুসলমান উভয় সম্প্রদায়ের নেতারা সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন সম্বন্ধে কিছুই করেন নাই। বরং Congress নেতারা তার উল্টো কাজ করেছেন। অধিকাংশ হিন্দু নেতারা সাম্প্রদায়িক ঝগড়ার দ্বারা শক্তি অর্জন করে মুসলমানদেরকে পদানত করবার মানস পোষণ করেন বাসনা পোষণ করেন। আর মুসলমান নেতারা করেন কি? অধিকাংশ মুসলমান নেতারা তাঁদের নেতৃত্ব বজায় রাখবার জন্য তাদের অস্পৃশ্যরূপে ব্যবহার করেন। মরহুম মৌলানা মহম্মদ আলি ২০।২৫ বছর আগে বলে গিয়েছিলেন, এবং এখনও সে নীতি পরিবর্ত্তিত হয়নি। তিনি বলেছিলেন হিন্দুরা বলে আমরা জাতীয়তাবাদী; তারা জাতীয়তাবাদী

নয়; তারা প্রকৃত সাম্প্রদায়িক। আর মুসলমানকে বলেন যে তারা সাম্প্রদায়িক; তারা সাম্প্রদায়িক নয়; তারা স্বার্থসর্ব্বস্ব, পকেটমার; নিজের পকেট ভরতেই কেবল জানে, আর কিছু জানে না। তবে মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে যাও ২।৪ জন আছে exceptionএর মধ্যে, তাদেরও ২ জনকে আমি দেখছি অন্যান্য নেতারা কোণঠাসা করে রেখেছেন। একটি আছেন Central Assemblyতে, আর একটি আছেন এখানে।

সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন সম্বন্ধে আস্থাহীন হওয়ার কোন কারণ নাই। সর্ব্ব শাস্ত্রেই আছে সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলনের কথা। হিন্দু শাস্ত্রে বলে কলি যুগের শেষে সত্য যুগের আবির্ভাব হবে, সর্ব্ব ধর্ম্মসমন্বয় হবে। Christian শাস্ত্রে বলে millennium হবে, মানে thousand years reign of Christ in personal love and in complete harmony. মুসলমান শাস্ত্রে দুটোকেই স্বীকার করে কারণ মুসলমান শাস্ত্র আল্লার শেষ বাণী।

Mr. ATUL SEN : হিন্দু শাস্ত্র কতটা পড়া আছে আপনার?

Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED : এ সম্বন্ধে আল্লাহ কি বলেছেন? একটি ইংরাজী অনুবাদ আমি বলবো, "The Koran is nothing but the old book of human life and the contents personify rules embodied in all the Sacred Scriptures with all the complete conditions necessary for the development of human faculty." অতএব কোরাণকে অবজ্ঞা করতে পারি না। সর্ব্ব শাস্ত্রই একথা গ্রহণ করে। (Hear! hear!) এখন কথা হচ্ছে যে আমাদের ministerরা সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন সম্বন্ধে কিছু করেন নাই। টাকা রেখেছেন অথচ তার কোন কায করেন নাই। কাজ করেন নাই কেন? কাপুরুষতার পরিচয় দিলেন কেন? চেষ্টার দ্বারা সব হতে পারে। শাস্ত্রে বিধান আছে, কেন হবে না? এখন পৃথিবী জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানে উন্নত হয়েছে, যে অবস্থায় উন্নত হয়েছে এখন একে বলা যায় God's family. এই এখন প্রকৃত সময় এসেছে। সর্ব্ব ধর্ম্মসমন্বয়ের চেষ্টার দ্বারা সব হতে পারে। যা নাকি ঈশ্বর আমাদের জন্য নির্দ্দিষ্ট করে রেখে গিয়েছেন, চেষ্টা করতে হবে, বিনা চেষ্টায় হবে না। শাস্ত্রেরও বিধান আছে striving is necessary; whatever one wants can only be obtained by striving. Striving করতে যেয়ে তাঁরা কেন যে কাপুরুষতা প্রদর্শন করলেন, আমি তার কিছু কারণ পাচ্ছি না। আমার প্রস্তাব হচ্ছে যে অবিলম্বে পাঁচটি divisionএর জন্য পাঁচটি ক্ষুদ্র committee গঠন করে তাঁরা সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন প্রচারের জন্য পাঠিয়ে দিন। তারা সাম্প্রদায়িক মিলন প্রচার করুক, নিশ্চয় হবে। অবশ্য ২।৪।৫ বছর দেরী হতে পারে, কিন্তু এর আশু একটা ফল আছে। আশু ফল এই যে সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গাহাঙ্গামা কমে যাবে। এমন কি না'ও হতে পারে। কমবে নিশ্চয়ই, কমতে বাধ্য। কিন্তু যে লোকগুলির দ্বারা committee গঠন করবেন, সে সম্বন্ধে বলতে চাই যে, হিন্দু মুসলমান মিলিত হয়ে একটি committee গঠন হওয়া চাই এবং এমন লোক দ্বারা গঠন হওয়া চাই যাদের নাকি হিন্দু-মুসলমান মিলনে আস্থা আছে, যাঁরা তাতে বিশ্বাস করেন সেই রকম লোকের দ্বারা। আমার এই মাত্র বলবার ছিল।

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Sir, the first and the foremost question which is agitating our minds is the food problem; in Chittagong there is great scarcity of rice which is selling at one and a half seer per rupee. Thousands of poor and middle class people are starving for they cannot make their two ends meet. I understand

that the Central Government have made arrangements for import into Bengal of large quantities of rice which will arrive within the next few days. I therefore most strongly urge the Government to send a portion to Chittagong at once and if it is delayed one thousand tons should be immediately sent from the Government stock in Calcutta. I would also suggest that a census of stock of rice and paddy in the hands of the agriculturists and the merchants be taken at once. But if the Hon'ble Minister thinks that he has got no power to help us he should tell us point-blank whom should we approach.

The second important problem is the question of imposition of collective fines upon Muslims for no fault of their own. They have been victimised and harassed at this critical time of acute distress in the country. Perhaps this is an attempt to shatter the unflinching loyalty of the Muslim community in general towards the British rule and indirectly compel them to join the Congress subversive movement. Since the movement started Muslims as a class have kept themselves completely aloof which has been admitted by Government. But unfortunately the Muslims of Durgapur and Satarua villages, police-station Mirsarai, district Chittagong, were penalised for burning the post offices of Bharodas *hât* in village Durgapur and Karer *hât* in village Satarua by the Hindus.

The poor and innocent Muslims did not join the Congress movement at all, but on the other hand they worked as members of the Village Defence Society and patrolled the villages and railway lines as well. Even during the month of fasting (Ramzan) they ungrudgingly performed the patrol duty in spite of their serious inconveniences. The Hindus did not join the patrol party and on the contrary defied the orders of the authorities, but no steps were taken to make them special constables. In the absence of wholetime guards patrolling by the village defence parties could not stop the incendiarism, as the parties were supposed to do patrol duty during certain specified hours of the night. I may mention here that in the town of Chittagong the Town Khas Mahal Office which is situated by a Warden Post and near the Kotwali and where police and military patrol was regularly going on was burnt down to ashes with all its records by incendiary fire causing serious inconveniences to the public. Having regard to these facts, how the Government is justified in imposing collective fines on Muslims of those villages? It is alleged that they neglected their duties. How they neglected their duties is beyond imagination. There is a vast gulf of difference between one who is guilty and one who is not. Since 1918 Durgapur is one of the notorious places in India for its seditious activities and subversive movements. Paragraph 103, page 76 of the Rowlatt Committee's Report of 1918 showed the position and since then the revolutionary organisations have been going on in Durgapur. In the last Chittagong Armoury Raid Case, in the tampering with railway lines and cutting of telegraphic wires, the Hindu youths of Durgapur played a prominent part. Even last year an absconder of the Armoury Raid Case was arrested in the said village in a Hindu house and a woman was also convicted for harbouring the absconder. A few days before the burning of the post offices, fire was set to the *dâk* bungalow at Zorwarganj which was partly

damaged after the Congress declaration of civil disobedience. But the local police officer in charge, who was a Hindu, did not take any prompt action to haul up the recorded members of the revolutionary party. It is simply impossible for Muslim residents of the said villages to recognise the miscreants and keep watch over their secret movements as Hindu quarters and Muslim quarters are situated at a respectable distance from each other; besides, the majority of Muslims are uneducated and they have had no opportunity to mix with Hindu *bhadralogs*. Thus the Muslims were quite in the dark about what the Hindu youths were doing. Besides, Bharadas Hat P.O. is in the centre of a Hindu village. Knowing full well for many years past as to who were responsible for mischievous activities there, it is unjust and unfair to penalize the poor Muslims for the offence of others. I therefore strongly condemn the action of the Government and urge to remit immediately the penalty realised from Muslims of those villages.

The sufferers of Durgapur submitted a representation to Government for remission of the fines, but no orders have yet been passed. On the other hand, the Hon'ble the Chief Minister made a statement sometime ago that on the recommendation of the District Magistrate the collective fines were imposed. He shifted the responsibility from his shoulder to the local officer and Dr. S. P. Mukerji in his statement the other day thrust all the blame for collective fines upon the Governor. But we find that Sir Md. Sadullah, the Chief Minister of Assam, advised and persuaded the Governor to pass orders excluding the Muslims and Government officials from payment of collective fines for similar offences committed there. I think our Chief Minister was afraid of his Hindu colleagues to make such suggestion to the Governor, as he has to depend entirely for his present position upon Hindu support. So the position now occupied by a Muslim as Chief Minister of Bengal is a curse to the Muslim nation.

I urge my Muslim colleagues on the other side of this House to pause for a moment and think whether they are in any way justified in supporting a Ministry which is dominated by the Hindus and is quite unable to defend the Muslim interests. How long should they shut up their eyes and allow such a *zoolum* upon the Muslim nation to go on?

(The member at this stage having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will say a few words and resume my seat. I need only touch a few points. Government have not granted dearness allowance to the staff of this House. We know that charity begins at home, but the employees of this Assembly have been deprived of that privilege by the present Government. The dearness allowance that has been sanctioned for the staff attached to the Legislative Assembly is very inadequate. If we look to the allowance granted by the other departments, say for example, the Government of India Railway Department, we find that they have granted dearness allowance to their staff drawing up to Rs. 200 at the rate of Rs. 16 per month. Over and above that, they have given other allowances; but here the staff who are attending both morning

and evening are working without any house allowance, without any conveyance allowance and without any considerations whatsoever. You might remember that one person one day fainted and fell down. Is there anybody to take any interest in the unfortunate people? They work both in day and night. In the evening they are to remain up to 10 o'clock at night and in the morning they have to come at 7 o'clock. There is no house attached to the Assembly building, and these men have to come five or six miles without any conveyance allowance. In the old Council before the Government of India Act, 1935, those men who attended after 7 a.m. were granted an allowance up to four or five rupees, but that privilege has been denied to them by the present Government. I do not know the reason why they have discontinued that privilege. I therefore draw the attention of the Home Minister to consider this point and request him to give us a reply whether he is prepared to consider this point or not. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will speak on the demand and while doing so I will try to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Ministers of the House to the serious situation prevailing in our part of the country. Sir, an alarming situation has developed in the countryside since this House discussed the food problem facing the province. Supply of paddy and rice has dried up in many places. In my constituency, in many areas where famine conditions are prevailing, no paddy and rice worth mentioning are available for sale. Whatever small and insignificant quantities are available intermittently in black markets are selling at fabulously high prices. The question now is not only of high and prohibitive prices, but it is one of supply and availability. I have seen well-to-do families able to buy at high prices living on potatoes for days together, because no paddy and rice are available in the markets. Sir, it seems we are already in the grip of another "Mannantar". May I ask the Hon'ble Ministers how they intend to deal with the situation. Needless to say that it will brook no delay. Are they going immediately to throw supply in those areas where it has dried out? I ask the Hon'ble Ministers what do they intend to do with the stock purchased by the Supply Department? Will they utilize that for the urban areas and the millhands only, or will they throw that stock to relieve rural areas also? So far the Ministry has not come to the relief of the rural people either with denial rice or with the stock in the hands of the Supply Department. On the contrary, they have aggravated the distress of the rural people by making high purchases even in heavily deficit districts. They have not only bought from deficit districts, but removed the whole stock to Calcutta. What can be the meaning in removing large stocks from deficit zones? If the Government have the supply and solution of the problem of the deficit districts in mind, it is necessary to import stocks there from outside.

Sir, from my district which is deficit to the extent of 58 per cent. according to available statistics, thousands of maunds of paddy and rice have been bought and are being exported daily to Calcutta in spite of the embargo recently promulgated by Government. Only the other day I learnt that

hundreds of maunds or so of rice are being exported to Calcutta. From these deeds or rather misdeeds of the Ministry the desperate situation, which I alluded to, has arisen in my constituency. Thousands of people are starving there and are standing on the threshold of sure death from starvation.

Sir, to crown all these my constituency has been afforded the unique privilege of entertaining thousands of guests of His Majesty's Government, namely, the Arakanese refugees. I have learnt that at least 50 thousand of these refugees have been placed at Katabari in police-station Gobindaganj. Several thousands have already arrived. More are still arriving. These are the ways in which the administration is helping the distressed people of a deficit district.

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had two motions regarding the removal of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Faridpur District Board, but I do not like to move them as you have ruled. I support the general motion that has been moved by my honourable friend Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali.

First of all I congratulate the Khan Bahadur on the excellent speech he has made and on the thorough exposure of the shamelessness of the Government and of the campaign that is being pursued by the Government to supersede the district boards presided over by and to take action against chairmen who are Muslim Leaguers. I shall supply this House with an illustration of this policy of the Government of Bengal with regard to the District Board of Faridpur. Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali has shown, Sir, that Government is in a difficulty in the case of the Dacca District Board because Government has no case to supersede the Dacca District Board on the grounds stated. Similar difficulty was experienced by the Government in the case of the Faridpur District Board because there was a chairman whose work had been commended by two successive Commissioners of the Dacca Division. Mr. Fawcus, the then Commissioner of the Dacca Division, and Mr. Blair both gave him very good certificates for the work done by Mr. Yusuf Ali Choudhury, the chairman. They said that the board was being well run and the chairman was efficient. This being so, the Government had some difficulty in dealing with the Chairman of the Faridpur District Board, but the resourcefulness of the Government was equal to the occasion and I shall show, Sir, what steps and what subterfuge the Government resorted to to remove the Chairman of the Faridpur District Board. Sir, about the month of September last a notice was issued on the District Board of Faridpur to show cause why the board should not be superseded on certain grounds. One month's time was given to show cause. You will be surprised to hear, Sir, on what grounds an explanation was called for. All the grounds on which explanation was called for were covered by the audit note of the Accountant-General, Bengal. You know that all district boards are audited annually, and the Faridpur District Board was similarly audited and certain objections were taken on the audit note. These were all minor matters of administrative details, some of which happened long before

Mr. Yusuf Ali Chaudhury became the chairman of the district board. Now, Sir, three months' time is given to a district board to give explanation by the Accountant-General, Bengal. The time for giving explanation had not expired, but still the Government thought it fit to call for an explanation from the district board as to why it should not be superseded on those very grounds. In fact, that was not the time when the audit note of the Accountant-General, Bengal, ought to have been forwarded to Government, and I am sure it was not forwarded because the time for submitting explanation had not expired. Government procured a surreptitious copy and made the audit note the ground for superseding the District Board of Faridpur.

There was another additional ground, and it was this that the chairman had let out the use of the district board loud speaker for propaganda against Government. As you know, Sir, district board properties are very often let out on hire on payment of rent; many of the articles of the Faridpur District Board were similarly let out. In this case also, the loud speaker was hired to the Muslim League for a period of time. Sir, when the board was asked to give an explanation, the chairman formally asked for some time being given, but you will be surprised to hear that by a telegram the extension of time was refused by the Hon'ble Minister in charge. Government took advantage of an occasion which was offered by a meeting of the Faridpur District Board that was to be held on the 28th October last. A day before the date of the meeting the Chief Whip of the Progressive Government Party visited Faridpur along with some other Progressive M.L.As. and M.L.Cs. and there he collected together the Subdivisional Officers who were members and several other non-official members of the district board at a particular place and put this categorical question to those members of the district board: "Look here, you are going to lose your membership. Unless you decide to remove the chairman you lose your membership because in that case the board is going to be superseded."

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On a point of personal explanation, Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: You can make your submission after the member has finished his speech.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That was the day before the meeting of the district board. Now, Sir, on the 28th on which the meeting was to be held notice was given for holding two meetings—one a special meeting and another an ordinary meeting. In the special meeting there was one subject. The subject was consideration of the subject of delimitation of constituencies, and there was a general meeting in which also there was one subject, namely, item No. 24—consideration of the letter of Government asking for an explanation from the district board as to why it should not be superseded. Now, Sir, as soon as this special meeting began, it was pointed out by a certain member that that was not a proper subject for a special meeting under the rules and the chairman held that the special meeting was not in order. The party in the board who are supporting the present Government were trying to bring a no-confidence vote against the chairman in the said

special meeting, but they had tabled no motion whatever for that purpose. What they did was an attempt to bring that subject in the course of the sitting of the day by hook or by crook. Sir, it is atrocious that a subject like the removal of the chairman could be attempted to be brought at a meeting without previous notice. The attempt was made in connection with item No. 24. But the chairman very properly held that such a motion was out of order. These are the facts and what they did next was to collect signatures on a draft resolution outside the House. Some of the signatures were procured in the house of the District Magistrate, and other members of the district board were approached in their own houses even next day or several days after the meeting and a number of signatures were procured under threat or after exercising undue influence. You will be pleased to see that on the very next day of the meeting of the 28th the chairman forwarded the proceedings of that meeting to the Commissioner, through the Collector. Seven days after the meeting, a member who belonged to the Opposition Party forwarded to Government his own report of the proceedings of that meeting. Government probably thought that they should not take action on that report, and they asked the Commissioner of the Division to make an enquiry into the matter. The Commissioner of the Division, on the report of the Collector, reported that a motion like that, namely, for the removal of the chairman could not be brought at that meeting and, in fact, he held that the ruling of the chairman declaring the motion to be out of order was correct. The Commissioner further said that there were certain irregularities in the pocedure adopted at the meeting and maintained that the best course would be to annul the proceedings and hold another meeting in which the subject of the board's explanation might be properly considered, and he also said that if any member or members wanted to bring a no-confidence motion against the chairman he or they could do so after giving proper notice as required by the rules. You will be surprised to know, that after that the Minister in charge of Local Self-Government either sent for the Commissioner of the Division or took advantage of an occasion when the Commissioner happened to be in Calcutta and there he tried to induce him, as far as reports go, to agree with him for the removal of the chairman on the report of the proceedings of the meeting as forwarded by one of the members. Apparently, the Commissioner was not willing to agree. He was confronted with legal opinion. I submit, Sir, that legal opinion, if any, must have been based on misrepresentation of facts. If it was stated to the Advocate-General that signatures were obtained outside the House and on the basis of that an attempt was being made to remove the chairman certainly his opinion would have been otherwise. I am sure that the facts were misrepresented and therefore proper legal opinion was not obtained. I would challenge the Hon'ble Minister to state whether actually the Commissioner gave in writing his opinion that he agreed with the legal opinion. This is the state of things, Sir, under which the chairman was removed. The next meeting of the board was to be held on the 28th November, and it was on the 26th November, *i.e.*, two days before that meeting, that the Government of Bengal by an extraordinary gazette took the extraordinary course

of removing the Chairman of the Faridpur District Board out of fear that if it was not done before the 28th; then in the meeting of the 28th the proceedings of the last meeting as reported by the chairman would be confirmed and in that case it would not be possible to take action against the chairman on the strength of the report of the meeting of the 28th October as reported by a pro-Government member of the board. Therefore, Sir, in hot haste on the 26th by an extraordinary gazette they removed the chairman.

These are the circumstances under which the chairman was removed. There are also other things. I have to finish my speech forthwith. Otherwise I could place before the House further facts to show the manner in which the Government have gone out of their way to remove the chairmen of district boards who are Muslim Leaguers or who otherwise are their political opponents. Sir, I support the motion moved by Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali.

Mr. YOUSUF MIRZA: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. My name has been mentioned with regard to the Faridpur District Board. I can assure you that I did go to Faridpur, but it was on a shooting excursion and with regard to nothing else.

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to speak on cut motion No. 2 moved by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan on the failure of the Ministry to assume responsibility for the actions of the officers of Government.

Sir, it is a most astonishing thing that it should be possible for a motion of this nature and in these terms to be moved in any Constitutional Legislature, but that it has been moved legitimately in this Legislature has been proved by events in the last session and even more by events and utterances in this House in the present session and, in fact, it is not only essential that it should be moved but it has become a matter of urgent necessity.

Sir, it is axiomatic that when Ministers accept office in a Constitutional Government they accept responsibility for the conduct of the administration under that Constitution; and, as heads of various departments, they accept responsibility for the conduct and work of the administrative officers under their control. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who are responsible to them.) Since a Ministry directs the conduct of the administration, it is fundamental that Hon'ble Ministers must defend the conduct of their own officers against criticism in the Legislature; and to do otherwise is, in our opinion, to undermine the administration, to strike at the roots of Constitutional Government itself and to invite chaos and anarchy.

Sir, a Ministry cannot disclaim responsibility for the administration and expect to remain in office. If a Ministry, in whole or in part, feels that it has lost its grip on the administration, the only logical thing for it to do is to resign and make way for those who, with an equal knowledge of the constitution, (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who would be "show-boys" of the Governor!) are prepared honestly to accept the responsibilities of office.

The existence of a strange ethereal body—a Council of Ministers—remote from the administration, and even presuming to criticise and judge that

administration, was suggested in this House during the last session, but the new creed was first given concrete form by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee in this House during the present session when he made a statement explaining his resignation. From that statement it was obvious that Dr. Mookerjee's real quarrel was with the present Constitution and with the British Government. It was made emphatically clear, as had long been apparent, that he was less interested in the duties of a Provincial Minister under the existing Constitution than with all-India political matters, and his main object was clearly to bring about a change in the present Constitution. On the constitutional issue Dr. Mookerjee has every right to his own opinion and every right to express it, and he is entitled to hold what views he likes. I believe he thinks conscientiously that he is right; we think he is wrong, but holding the views which he does and which he did his action in resigning from the Ministry was perfectly logical and perfectly correct.

In his statement, however, he suggested that in this province there was a Government within a Government and that the real Government was being run by a small coterie of permanent officials (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a fact!) who were obstructing and ignoring the advice of the Hon'ble Ministers. Furthermore, he took great pains to assure us that he had no difference of opinion on these matters with his former colleagues; and in the absence of any statement to the contrary from this Ministry we are left to assume that his colleagues or some of them are in general agreement with his statement, but not to the extent of following him into the wilderness. There again I think they were right, but they owe to us in the Legislature a denial of that part of Dr. Mookerjee's statement with which they did not agree to the extent of following him out of the Ministry. The Hon'ble Chief Minister himself promised us a statement as long ago as the 12th of last month, but so far no statement has been forthcoming. But while the Chief Minister has made no reply to that statement, his replies to questions in this House have reinforced the suggestion that he at any rate is in general agreement with the picture presented by Dr. Mookerjee. We have been treated to confessions that he is helpless in the administration; that he has not been consulted on matters of importance; that in many cases action was taken before his consent was obtained; and that in fact the Hon'ble Ministers were no more than ciphers sandwiched between His Excellency the Governor and the permanent officials. How can we, Sir, respect and support a Ministry which confesses to such weakness and ineffectiveness while still remaining in office? Self-respect alone demands that it should make way for a Ministry with more virility and robustness of purpose.

It appears to us, Sir, that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in particular has grasped at this new creed as a useful expedient for evading responsibility, but still remaining in office. He is prepared at the behest of Dr. Mookerjee and the official Congress Party to accept a demand based upon a printed statement made by the Hindu Mahasabha for an independent enquiry into the conduct of Government officers at Midnapore, knowing full well that

in the present military situation such an enquiry was probably impossible; and knowing full well also that in these circumstances it would be perfectly easy for him to pass on the responsibility for not holding an enquiry to someone else.

It would appear to us, Sir, that while still remaining in office the Hon'ble Chief Minister has handed over the reins of Government to Dr. Mookerjee and the official Congress Party. Sir, we do not want to be governed by Dr. Mookerjee and Dr. Sanyal, we want to be governed by a responsible Ministry of Bengalee Ministers which has the strength and courage of its own convictions. If the present Ministry feels itself to be in such a weak and debilitated state of constitutional and political health that it must hand itself over unreservedly into the hands of the Doctors, then, Sir, the right thing for the Ministry to do is to take a long rest and hand over the administration to a new and healthier Ministry capable of accepting responsibility and dealing with the manifold problems that confront the province at the present time.

The confessions of the Hon'ble Chief Minister show, in our opinion, not that he is being frustrated by the permanent officials, but that he is failing to govern and direct the administration for which he is responsible. If he is wholly absorbed in the important matter of keeping his party together and remaining in power, we can well understand that in many cases he has little time for directing and controlling the departments of which he is in charge, and that therefore it is quite possible that in many cases he is able to state with justification that he has not been consulted or that actions have been taken without his consent being obtained. But, Sir, that is his fault and not the fault of the Constitution or of the administrative officials.

We are well aware, Sir, that the activities of the Home Department are now largely dictated by war necessities and by the Defence of India Rules. But, Sir, Hon'ble Ministers who remain in office do so in the full knowledge that they must accept those rules in the same way as they accepted the Constitution when they accepted office in the first instance. We are asked to believe that the number of times in which the advice of the Ministers has been overruled by the head of the State may be—to use the Chief Minister's own words—two to two hundred times with the general idea of convincing us that he is generally and constantly being overruled. This may be so, but the Chief Minister's statement has not convinced us nor is it likely to convince us, for we believe that the real number of cases in which the head of the State has had to exercise his special responsibility can be counted on the fingers of one hand. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How do you know that?) That is our belief.

It is our considered opinion, therefore, Sir that a Ministry which, in whole or in part, clings to office while failing to exercise the responsibilities of that office and fails in the elementary duty of assuming responsibility for the actions of its own administrative officers is being honest with neither itself, nor the Legislature, nor the country at large.

I do not consider that all the Ministers in the present Ministry are equally open to criticism on this score, but in view of their joint responsibility it is not for me to discriminate between them. With regard to their joint responsibility, however, for the administrative machine, there are two alternatives open to them: one is to accept full responsibility for the administration including its own officers and stay in office and the other, if they feel themselves incapable of carrying out that responsibility, is to resign, in other words, Sir, to govern or get out.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: And make room for your satellites!

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had no mind to intervene in this debate, but after the speech that has been delivered by the Leader of the European Group I feel tempted to speak. The Leader of the European Group has taken upon himself to misinterpret the Constitution under which we are acting here. Nothing, I admit, Sir, is more welcome than the straightforward motion of my honourable friend, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. His motion is to this effect, that the Ministry ought to have accepted responsibility for all the acts done by the permanent officials. That is his proposition. (Cries of "No, no" from the Opposition benches.) I say, yes, that is his cut motion in print and that is how his motion has been interpreted by the Leader of the European Group. Sir, the Government of India Act provides that the permanent officials in this country are servants of the Crown, and that they are fully under the supervision of the Governors and the Governor-General, that is, the representatives of the Crown here. That is, Sir, what is provided in the Government of India Act. Then, Sir, the Joint Committee of the Parliament in paragraph 288 of their report indicates the rights of the Imperial Service. There it is stated that the permanent servants appointed by the Secretary of State have the rights, first of all, to complain to the Governor; secondly, they have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State; thirdly, they have the right to have any order of posting or of censure passed on any of them to be concurred in or approved by the Governor; and fourthly, in other matters also, affecting their conditions of service or emoluments they are subject to the orders of the Governor or of the Secretary of State. That is, Sir, the Constitution here. Nowhere does the Constitution provide that they are to serve the Ministers. Sir, that is the differentiating position so far as the constitutional position of the permanent officials in this country is concerned. But what is the duty of permanent officials in independent or self-governing countries? For instance, what are their duties in England? "The foremost function of a civil servant" in England says Mr. Jennings, "is to protect his Minister". "And", says Mr. Jennings, "since the Minister must not be exposed to criticism, the department must not make mistakes". Here it is the contrary: here the Ministers are expected to ditto everything that the permanent officials do; here the Ministers are expected to whitewash all the misdeeds of the permanent officials; here the Ministers are expected to extol all the excesses that may be committed by the permanent officials; these are expected here. Sir, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan made it a point that the Chief Minister

was not satisfied with the enquiry that was made by the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, in respect of certain firing incidents and that he was disposed to make an independent enquiry. Sir, he was surely within his rights to do that; even in England this is done and this is never considered as the letting down of permanent officials. Mr. Ivor. Jennings in his book, "Parliament", has given the following famous example: "On 17th May, 1928, Mr. T. Johnston, by private notice, asked the Home Secretary, 'whether he was aware that on Tuesday, the 15th May, at about 1-50 p.m., two police officers called at the place of business of Miss Savidge, and without affording her any opportunity of communicating with her parents or legal advisers..... ...conveyed her to Scotland Yard, and that there she was questioned by two police officers for a period exceeding five hours; and whether such action was authorised by the right honourable gentleman in connection with his enquiry into Sir Leo Money case?' The Home Secretary returned a soft answer, giving some information, and stating that he was making enquiries. Further questions followed producing a telephoned message from Scotland Yard which, being read by the Minister, was interrupted with cries of 'shame'!"——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: So it appears that "shame" is parliamentary.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: "At the end of questions, Mr. Johnston moved the adjournment of the House. The motion was accepted by the Speaker and was adequately supported. Thereupon a debate took place the same evening. The Home Secretary sent for the Director of Public Prosecutions and the police officers. While Mr. Johnston was speaking to the adjournment motion, the Minister's private parliamentary secretary secured a denial of some of the allegations from the police officers; nevertheless, the Home Secretary at once consented to a public enquiry." That enquiry was conducted by a Tribunal and "the enquiry resulted in some criticism of the police, and a Royal Commission then examined the whole question of police powers and practice." Sir, that was not considered letting down the permanent officials in England; but here if the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq comes forward to agree to an independent enquiry or even to instituting a judicial enquiry, it is considered that he is letting down the permanent officials. What are the Ministers expected to do here then? They are expected, as I have stated before, to ditto, to approve, to sing Hallelujah and to whitewash all excesses and misdeeds committed by the permanent officials. Sir, that is considered to be the business of Ministers here by those who invoke the Constitution, prate of Constitutions and in the name of Constitution utter all sorts of nonsense. Then, Sir, it is said that the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq ought not to have consented to institute a judicial enquiry into the Midnapore affairs. Why? Because it is alleged that there was a perfect rebellion there. Assuming that there was a rebellion, why should not there be an enquiry into the excesses? Nobody questions the legitimate measures that might have been taken for the

maintenance of law and order. The enquiry is to be made as to whether excesses were committed or not, if committed on what scale, and whether or not innocent people were put to unnecessary and terrible suffering as narrated on a previous occasion in this House. That is, Sir, the issue that the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq considers ought to be enquired into by a judicial tribunal and for which the motion proposes to censure him.

Well, Sir, may I remind the House that there was a Moplah rebellion some years ago, and who asked for an enquiry into the Moplah rebellion? Did not the members of the Muslim League of the time demand that there ought to be an enquiry into the measures taken to suppress the Moplah rebellion? There was, Sir, the Punjab rebellion, and who started the enquiry there into the measures taken to suppress it? The enquiry was started by the Home Government of those people who leave their British instincts just on landing at Bombay. The enquiry, Sir, was started and conducted by a Royal Commission in spite of the fact that there was a perfect rebellion in the Punjab. What is the wrong therefore, Sir, in instituting a judicial enquiry into the Midnapore affairs I for myself cannot understand. Our constitution provides for a two-fold arrangement in the governance of the province. In matters of ministerial responsibility, it is well known, the responsibility vests in the Ministers; but in other matters the responsibility does not vest in them. In the latter case it is for the Ministers to cite those instances in which their advices have not been accepted by the head of the executive. It is the only honest, the only straightforward course that can be expected of a Minister responsible as he is to the Legislature under the Indian Constitution, and that honest and straightforward course was conceded by the Viceroy in June, 1937, as a result of which the Congress accepted office. The present Constitution as interpreted by the Viceroy does not require that one has got to play the role of a Minister and dishonestly assume responsibility in cases where no responsibility attaches to him. Therefore, he, answerable as he is to the Legislature and the people of his province, must disown imputed responsibility and it is only expected of honest and straightforward men that they ought to say what their advice was on a particular question and in which cases their advice was not accepted by the head of the executive or not followed by the permanent service.

That is, Sir, what I have got to say in opposing the motion moved by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as a representative of the Anglo-Indian community I should be permitted to say a few words on the general administration of our province. Let us not only find fault. Finding fault is quite in order, but let us get at the motive also. The Anglo-Indians have a special complaint. Why were "vice areas" opened in our midst and men made to vacate their homes? It is against Army Regulations. Was it to prevent marriages and the growth of our population by placing this indignity on us?

It is now clear that there is a fight for supreme power and control of this province between the Governor and his I.C.S. officers and the Self-Government Ministers of the Coalition Party supported by the party of the ex-Ministers.

Sir, the Japs are in Burma and it is also said that there are people in the country who are in league with the enemy. Therefore the slightest disorder in the administration of the province will be an invitation to the enemy to invade our province and then God help the lot of us. Sir, who will then have supreme control, the Japs or the party the Japs may put in power? Under ordinary conditions the Governor could apply section 93 of the Government of India Act and take the province under his control, but as this is a Muslim majority province and one which the great Muslim League Leader considers to be within his Pakistan scheme as was seen yesterday by his members in this House wearing their special rosettes with the letter P. ("Hear! hear!" from Muslim League Opposition benches.) It would not be fair to the Muslims unless the Opposition Leader, Sir Nazimuddin, was first given an opportunity to rally all the forces of the province together, namely, Muslims, Hindus and British and form a National Government working in harmony with the Governor and his I.C.S. officials. ("Hear, hear" from the Muslim League Opposition benches.) This will give certain Hindu leaders an opportunity to vindicate themselves who may have been falsely accused of selling our country to the enemy. It is not words, but deeds that we want. The Anglo-Indians at such a crisis should blindly support the party that stands by the Governor and his I.C.S. officers, since the Government of India Act, 1935, allows them supreme control. We cannot be traitors to receive favour. Surely the Clive Street merchants are not out to cause a revolution in the country and jeopardise all their interests. Can we possibly believe that the British Government will leave us to our fate? Well, Sir, if this is so, it is doubly necessary to throw responsibility on the United Nations of Muslims, Hindus and the British who have their vital interests in the country. Therefore, let us form a new Coalition.) (Cheers from Muslim League Opposition benches.)

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, on another occasion in this House, without meaning any offence to any party, and describing the difficulties of the Congress Party in the Assembly, I stated that we were between the devil and the deep sea. I never imagined, Sir, that that remark of mine was one of the truest things I ever said in my life. Since yesterday I have been worrying and worrying not knowing what to do, but if I had any doubt yesterday I have none now. I must congratulate Mr. Hendry for the brilliant speech he has delivered because it has given me light. I know which way to go.

Sir, I am sorry that my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan has compelled us to take sides. (Laughter from Muslim League Opposition benches.) I am glad that the honourable members are amused, but I can promise that they

won't be so cheerful after I have finished. Following the principle of our party that we shall judge every matter on its own merits, every issue on its own merits, we took care not to enter into party squabbles or power politics. But I am sorry, Sir, that my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan has forced us to take sides. I am also sorry for another reason. The reason is this——(A voice from the Muslim League benches: "Pretext!") Pretext is your monopoly, I know. (Laughter.) I am very sorry that we have to break our neutrality today. I am very sorry because for the last few weeks I have been thinking of the conditions in Bengal. We are before one of the worst famines that has ever visited this province. There is want of food, want of cloth, want of necessaries of life and there is the Japanese menace. I thought, Sir, that no single party, no Cabinet formed of a single party was capable of dealing with the problems which have arisen today. The best thing for us would be if we had a Cabinet formed of all parties, of course all parties who are prepared to work this constitution, *i.e.*, excluding ourselves. I thought, Sir, that this is no time for ideological fight. We should have a Cabinet, an administrative Cabinet which can provide food, which can provide cloth and which can provide the necessaries of life. I was not alone in thinking on those lines. There were other distinguished members of this House who thought on those lines also. I may mention the name of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. He in his usual energetic way moved in this matter, and I also tried to help him to the best of my ability. I thought that my qualification as an intermediary was not bad, because I belong to a party which is completely disinterested in the distribution of offices. We saw the leaders of various groups, all the important leaders, and we met with an encouraging response from everybody, but there are of course difficulties in the way. I do not deny the existence of difficulties. Some of the difficulties were solved while the other difficulties are not such that they could not be surmounted with a little patience and give and take. Therefore, Sir, I am sorry that in the midst of our work my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan thought it fit to spoil our efforts by moving a vote of censure. But, in spite of to-day's debate, in spite of a little bitterness which I know will be there, we will try and we are sure we shall succeed along with other friends who are working with us in bringing about some sort of all party arrangement in this province.

Coming to the subject under discussion, I am sorry for the vote of censure which has been moved and especially for the speech of my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, once a rebel in 1921, one of the worst rebels in the district of Faridpur who was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and was even handcuffed I do not know for what reason. (A voice from the Muslim League benches: "That was in connection with the Khilafat movement.") Yes, for the Khilafat movement. At that time the Khilafat and the Congress worked together. Sir, he has changed and he has changed a great deal. (Mr. M. A. H. Ispahani rose to speak.) Sir, I would request Mr. Ispahani to wait and make a well-thought-out speech later on.

Mr. Speaker, as regards the present Ministry we are also dissatisfied. We are dissatisfied because the grievances of the political prisoners have not been removed. We are dissatisfied because the question of collective fines

has not been properly dealt with. Above all there is the failure to solve the question of food. I can mention many other instances. Therefore, Sir, we are thoroughly dissatisfied with the present Cabinet. Sir, when my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan moved his vote of censure, unfortunately I was not present in this House. I wondered what were the grounds of his censure. I thought that once a political prisoner it might be that it was the sorrows of the political prisoners that touched his heart. I thought it might be connected with the peasants of Bengal, or it might be the question of collective fines imposed on innocent people, or it might be the food question. But no, none of these. (A voice from the Muslim League benches: "We are anxious for our food.") Yes, I know that you are anxious for your own food. (Laughter.) Mr. Speaker, the sensitive heart of the ex-rebel was not touched with all these questions. He was angry because the poor helpless Indian Civil Service Officers were being let down by this Cabinet! (Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: He has seen new light!) Yes, he has admitted that. His position is that this Cabinet ought to be censured, because this Cabinet did not support the permanent officials, right or wrong (Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I never said that.) If you never intended to say that, you should not have read that speech written by somebody else. (Laughter.)

Mr. Speaker, before I examine the various charges if I have time to do so, I want to say a few words about the position of the executive in this country. I do not pretend, Sir, to be a constitutional *pandit* like Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri or my friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal. As far as I have understood the position of the executive in this country according to the Constitution of 1935 and later amended in 1939, the function of the executive can be divided roughly into four categories. There is first of all the field of ministerial responsibility. In this field the Governor takes and is bound by the advice given by the Ministry. So long as the present Civil Service carries out that policy and also carries out in a manner desired by the Ministry I think, Sir, they should stand by the permanent officials. The second category is the individual judgment of the Governor. In this category, Sir, the Governor shall ask for the advice of the Ministry but is not bound by the advice given to him. Therefore, any order given under this category is the Governor's own order. The third category is Governor's discretion. In this category the Governor is not bound to ask for advice. Therefore, an order given under this category is completely the Governor's order. The fourth category is the category in which under section 126A of the Government of India Act the permanent Civil Service of this province as of other provinces are bound to carry out the orders given by the Government of India from Delhi. Therefore, Sir, I ask my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, who, after all, must be more familiar with this Act than myself because he has been a Minister of the Crown, is it fair to hold the Ministers responsible except for all works done under the first category where Ministers are responsible for all the acts and all the policies?

Then, Sir, let us consider another point for a moment. The members of the permanent Civil Service and of all the services owe their appointment

to the Crown and owe their promotion to the Crown. They cannot be transferred, they cannot be punished, and they cannot be censured even by the Ministers. After that, what do we expect? (Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: It is not correct.) I bow to the superior knowledge of Mr. Israil who seems to be an expert in these matters.

Sir, after this do you wonder that the permanent Civil Service will try to sabotage any popular Ministry? They tried the game in the Congress provinces. There, because the Congress was in an overwhelming majority, that game did not succeed completely, but here it has succeeded because there are men like my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan who will supply their "Yes-men" when they go over to the other side.

Sir, I want to examine the charges very briefly. I understand that one of the charges is that the present Cabinet did not agree with the repressive policy of the Government of India. If that is true, I congratuate the present Cabinet.

Now, let me refer to the Calcutta firing. Sir, you remember that during this firing some innocent men were—I use the word—murdered. There was one instance of a telephone operator being shot and killed on the spot. There is another case of a young Bengalee who was going with a list to the market to buy things for the marriage of his sister. Now, what is the offence that the Chief Minister is charged with? Instead of depending on the report of the Commissioner of Police, I do not know whether he requested the Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party or the Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party did it of his own motion, the Secretary appealed to the people to give the names of casualties to him. What is wrong in that? Everybody knows that in cases of this nature, the people do not like to go to the police. If they are killed, they are killed. If they are wounded, their first apprehension is that they may be arrested for rioting, at least they may be charged with stealing the shots found on their body. Is it unnatural then for the people to respond to this public appeal, and I think the Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party did his duty in asking for the names of the casualties.

Next, Sir, let me deal with the arrest of the members of this House—this is the most painful of all. After all, Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, Mr. Pratul Chandra Ganguly and others are our friends and they are our co-workers. The Chief Minister is guilty according to the honourable member on that side because he did not agree with the arrest and continued detention of these men. (Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Who said that?) You are never in this House; that is your difficulty.

Then, Sir, about the Midnapore enquiry. In Midnapore the allegation is that there have been burning of houses—houses belonging to innocent people—women have been ravished, and the police have looted. When the Chief Minister went to Midnapore, these allegations were, I understand, made before him and he has ordered an enquiry.

Now, what is wrong in that? What is wrong in that when we find that the officer at the head of that district has been most deservedly castigated

by two Hon'ble Judges of the High Court? It has been said that he was guilty of pettyfogging highhandedness. Does anybody criticize this? I do not refer to the European Block, but is there any Indian in this House who will say that the Midnapore atrocities do not deserve any enquiry?

Sir, after all, we politicians do not always look at things from the same point of view. Therefore, when Mr. Tamizuddin Khan took a different view, I felt pain but I was not surprised. But, Sir, I was not prepared for dishonesty. If you will read the agenda of the House, you will have a surprise. I understand this motion is not an individual motion, but it is a motion moved on behalf of the Muslim League Party. Now, read motion No. 15 in the name of Mr. Israil. I understand Mr. Israil is not only the constitutional *pandit*, he is also a luminary of the party. Now, in motion No. 15 Mr. Israil wants to protest against the arbitrary order of the District Magistrate of Mymensingh, Mr. S. Banerjee, I.C.S. That, of course, is not interfering with the service and not letting down the permanent officials. Then there is another motion—No. 16—in the name of Mr. Israil. (Interruptions from Opposition benches.) I know the discomfort the members on that side are feeling.

Now, in motion No. 16 Mr. Israil wants to protest against the conduct of local officials for ordering firing upon Muslims.

Then, Sir, there is a motion of similar nature by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan himself. I am sure there are not two Tamizuddin Khans in this House. Let us go to motion No. 18. By this motion Mr. Tamizuddin Khan wants to censure this Cabinet for failure to appoint a Committee of Enquiry into the Dacca Jail shooting incidents. Now, what is that? Is not that letting down the permanent officials? Now, Sir, the honourable members on that side want that we must stand by the permanent Civil Service when they shoot in Midnapore and when they order arrest in Midnapore but there must be an enquiry when they touch Mr. Israil, the *pandit*, and his friends. Sir, I was not prepared for such things.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: That is all rubbish.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Ispahani is asking me not to talk of rubbish. Sir, I know he is an expert on the commodity. He can even turn rubbish into rice. Sir, before I sit down I want to state again that we owe no allegiance to this party or that party.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: We owe no allegiance to any outside body.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: I thought you owed allegiance to Muslim League. But I was not saying anything about that.

We have judged Mr. Tamizuddin Khan's censure motion on its merits and we find that the motion he has moved is ill-advised. We find that the arguments he has advanced are most unconvincing and, what is more, lacking in honesty. (Cries of "No", "no" from the Opposition Benches.) Sir, we therefore oppose the motion.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I am very sorry that I have been misrepresented on so many points.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: On a point of order, Sir. Can the honourable member make a speech again?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I have been misrepresented on 4 points and I hope you will kindly allow me to offer a personal explanation to make the position clear.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: On a point of order, Sir. Has the honourable member got a right of reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. He is not replying. He has not got the right to reply, but he is rising on a point of personal explanation. He tried to rise when Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy was speaking, but I promised to give him an opportunity later on.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: As I said, Sir, I have been misrepresented on 4 points. The first point is——

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, if there is anything to be said now the Leader of the Opposition will speak. But the honourable member has no right to make a speech by way of a reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Khan, you, as an old parliamentarian, know very well what is meant by personal explanation. I hope knowing full well as you do what is personal explanation and what is a reply to a debate you will not insist on answering the points raised by Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy, but just in a few words you will state what your points of personal explanation are. If you have anything more to say you can communicate that to your deputy leader or to your leader and one of them will be permitted to speak by way of a reply.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That is exactly what is in my mind. My friend, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy, has stated that I said in my speech that the action of officers should be supported by the Ministry, whether right or wrong. I want to refer you, Sir, to one sentence only——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not say anything more. That is quite all right.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: On the other hand I said that the officials so long as they are loyal and faithful to the Ministry and do not transgress the bounds of——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Khan, your point of personal explanation has already been fully stated and you need not say anything more.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the last two days we have been discussing different motions with regard to the budget on general administration, but it is no use ignoring the patent fact that the

motion of the day is motion No. 2, which Mr. Tamizuddin Khan has brought before this House with the preliminary observation that it is a censure motion and his party wants Government and the House to regard it as such. It has received the blessings of the European party today. (Laughter.)

Dr. J. M. DAS GUPTA: All the blood-suckers will doubtless bless it.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Hendry in his carefully-prepared speech——

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: He seems to be sleeping.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: No, he is hearing. His ears are long enough to enable him to hear my voice. Mr. David Hendry in his carefully-written speech has asked the Chief Minister, whom I am still proud to regard as the leader of the party to which I have the honour to belong, why he is not going into the wilderness as one of his colleagues has done. I would remind Mr. Hendry and his friends here whether we remain in office or not this is our homeland, and we are not going into the wilderness. But let me remind my friends to the right that while we hope the Burma affair will shine up in greater glory and the reports of the last two days will prove false, if, however, things come to the worst and our unfortunate province is invaded, then my friends will not even have the time to go into the wilderness within the Indian soil.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Where shall we go?

Mr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Plunge into the Arabian Sea. Or, you can certainly come to us at the proper time and we shall then tell you where you could go.

Dr NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why worry? It is quite well known to everybody that a lot of aeroplanes have been kept ready by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to take our friends the Europeans to a safer zone.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I ask, Sir, what is the charge against the present Cabinet? Let me state in the first place that I have my grievances against the manner in which many things have been done by the present Ministry. There are also many in the party to which we belong who have grievances against the Ministry. But what is the significance of this motion? The significance of this motion is that the present Ministry is to be thrown out of office so that my friends, Sir Nazimuddin and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, who is busy carefully revising his carefully-written speech, may re-occupy the Treasury Bench with the willing support and co-operation of my friends to the right. Now, Sir, what is the charge? The support of the Hindu Mahasabha was sought for during the last few days by the very interrupters. That story, Sir, is not going to be narrated to-day, and I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to persuade his friends not to speak in that strain. Now, Sir, what is the scope of this cut motion? It is the failure—the alleged failure—of the Ministry to assume responsibility for the actions of officers of Government. With regard to the statement which I read out to this House and in the letters which I had written

to the Governor of Bengal which have been forfeited to the Crown—I do not know whether copies have been sent to His Majesty the King,—the High Court of Judicature in Bombay including a British Chief Justice and a British member of the Indian Civil Service have considered that that letter does not contain anything that is prejudicial from the point of view of security of the country. Now, Sir, in those letters I narrated the difficulties under which the present constitution was being worked in this province. I am not troubling the House today with the all-India questions. My friends Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy have explained that the constitution being what it is, it places the Ministers in a position where they have cent. per cent. responsibility but power is extremely limited. It is all right for Mr. Hendry to get up here and deliver sermons that the action of the Chief Minister strikes at the root of the constitutional Government and that he visualises in his night dreams chaos and anarchy as a result of the statements made by the Chief Minister. If it had been his country, if he had felt for this province as we the unfortunate children of the soil feel, then he would have said, "Yes, what has happened in the last few months does strike at the root of the constitutional Government. Yes, what has happened during the last few months forebodes chaos and anarchy, but the responsibility does not rest on the head of the Chief Minister. The responsibility rests"—and I say this with a full sense of responsibility myself, —"on the head of the Governor of this province." (Cheers from Congress Benches.) I am not criticising the Governor in his personal capacity but I claim the right to criticise the Governor as a part and parcel of the Government of Bengal, as the head of the executive Government of this province. I say, Sir, that if there had been a Governor like Lord Brabourne presiding over the destiny of this province today, that Governor would not have struck at the root of constitutional Government as Sir John Herbert has done. There have been occasions when officers had carried out the orders of the Governor as part and parcel of the Government of Bengal without the knowledge and concurrence of the Ministers of the province. These are facts. Such instances have happened.

Now, Sir, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, whose acrobatic performances so far as somersaults are concerned, will be remembered with gratitude by generations of job-hunters, brought out his charge-sheet. Crime—he started—the present Ministry has committed crimes—he is a criminal lawyer of no mean repute—he started thinking of crimes, and what are the crimes? The present Ministry has not done away with the rebels. Who are the rebels? (Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I never said that.) Yes, you did say that. Now, Sir, so far as the rebels are concerned the allegation was in the first instance that the Ministry had conspired with the rebels. If the Ministry has protested against highhanded bureaucratic interference with civil rights, it has only done its obvious duty. It has not in the least encouraged disobedience of law or undermined the correct standard of a just and fair administration. Who is a rebel? The rebel of today is the patriot of tomorrow. What has been happening in the occupied territory in France? I believe, Mr. Porter, if he takes note—I am not noticing his presence here in

the gallery—but if he takes note of reports which are allowed to be published in the newspapers describing the manner in which the patriotic activities of the free Frenchmen are being conducted in the occupied territory, challenging forced Nazi domination, he will himself realise how Indians are being instigated to commit similar acts in this country against an alien Government. (Cheers.) When such acts are committed in France they are described throughout the world as brave and patriotic acts because Hitler is occupying France against the will of the people of France. (Addressing the European Group.) What about you, my friends? Who asked you to remain here? Are you not occupying this territory against the will of the people of this country and is it not time that you should go home and leave our country to ourselves?

Now, Sir, the allegation has been made by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that the Chief Minister must be beheaded. Why? Because he tried to get a report from the Commissioner of Police regarding excesses. What a crime it must have been? (Laughter), and what was the report for? Because it was alleged innocent Bengalis were being shot at mercilessly on the streets of Calcutta. What is the allegation next? A Sub-Inspector of Police was murdered at Bhanga, and the Chief Minister supported the deputation of some members of the Progressive Coalition Party to visit the area of occurrence in the district of Faridpur. What a crime it was that these gentlemen hurried to the district representing their constituency? What did happen there? There was a serious allegation of disturbance in Bhanga, and all that some members of the Progressive Coalition Party, Hindus and Muslims, belonging to Faridpur did, was to visit that place in order to help the local authorities and soothe the people. They did not go as the representatives of the Government of Bengal. That was pointed out with sufficient clearness, but still it is a crime, for which Mr. Fazlul Huq has got to be ousted from office. Now what is happening in Bhanga today? There the murder trial is still going on. Mr. Fazlul Huq did not prevent the arrest and prosecution of the people who on the police report are supposed to have been complicated in this act of murder.

So far as Midnapore is concerned, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy read out certain amendments where demands for enquiry had been made by the members of the Muslim League Party itself, but he forgot to refer to Midnapore where Mr. Tamizuddin Khan wants a Committee of Enquiry. "No. 27. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan: Implementing the promise given by the Chief Minister for appointing a Committee to enquire into the alleged official excesses in the district of Midnapore". I have before me the report of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and he also said on that day that if on preliminary enquiry the Chief Minister was satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case, there must be an enquiry. (Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I have also said that.) If my friends have said that, then why regard it as a crime on the part of Mr. Fazlul Huq? Now let us have the point cleared up. Mr. Hendry will have to note this. What is the grievance of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan? That a Committee of Enquiry should be appointed but it has not yet been appointed? Or, why a Committee of Enquiry was at all

promised and, as Mr. Tamizuddin Khan stated, the officers thrown overboard? Mr. Hendry supports Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, not because the Enquiry Committee has not been appointed on account of the Governor's refusal but because the Enquiry Committee was at all promised by the Chief Minister on the floor of this House. Now the two are going to sail in the same boat, a boat which is unfortunately a leaky one and is not going to take them to the shore. Now, Sir, what has happened with regard to Midnapore? We have made allegations of excesses with a full sense of responsibility; we have said that there is evidence to show that things have happened in Midnapore which are a disgrace to any civilised Government, and if the Chief Minister has failed to implement his promise, it is not because the Chief Minister did not advise the Governor to act according to the wishes of the House, but because the Governor is sitting on the matter and will not allow a Committee of enquiry to be appointed. Everyone knows that that is the truth, but will the members of the Opposition have the courage to stand by the Chief Minister for the bold stand that he has taken for maintaining the dignity of the House?

Now, let me just for a few brief moments refer to Midnapore because of the serious nature of the facts which came to my hands only day before yesterday. Sir, I have got here certified copies of proceedings before the courts in Midnapore. In one instance—that is not a solitary instance but this is only an example—there was looting by police and troops in a house. As the looting was going on the owner of the house pointed out that he was not a Congresswalla at all; he had no sympathy with the Congress and with great earnestness produced Post Office Defence Savings Certificates to the value of Rs. 3,500. He said, "save us, see how loyal we are." Assaults and destruction had taken place in the meantime. The notes however were not left in the house. They were taken away along with other articles by the officer who had conducted that raid. Attempts were made to recover those notes. The representatives of that family came to Calcutta and one can well understand what their feelings were. As the higher quarters were being moved, the natural wrath of the local officials fell on that family. The only son of the owner of the house, an old gentleman of 60 years of age, was arrested under the Defence of India Rules on flimsy grounds. It took at least a month and a half before that man was discharged by the District Judge, who found that there was not an iota of evidence against that man. This was only a fortnight ago. After legal proceedings were instituted, these notes have been recovered from the custody of the local officials who are still in office in the district of Midnapore. Then what happened? This gentleman had in his granary 2,000 maunds of paddy. On the 18th Jannary—I have a certified copy of the Subdivisional Officer's order here also—an order was served on this old gentleman that he was to make over these 2,000 maunds of paddy immediately. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Under the Defence of India Rules?) Yes, under the Defence of India Rules. On the next day before there was an opportunity for serving this order on this gentleman, he was brought under arrest and proceedings were started against him, because he had not carried out an

order of the Subdivisional Officer which was not at all served on him. The entire 2,000 maunds of paddy were taken possession of, the gentleman was at the same time arretsed; there have been repeated adjournments and he is still not at liberty. (A VOICE FROM THE MUSLIM LEAGUE OPPOSITION BENCHES: Who is the Subdivisional Officer?) It is not my concern whether he is a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian. He is a Subdivisional Officer. I regard the guilty officers as public servants who are not discharging their duties. I ask my friends on the Opposition not to enquire about the religion of a particular officer. My allegation has never been communal in character. The Home Minister is helpless. These derelictions of duty would come out only if there is an enquiry. You strengthen the hands of the Home Minister by insisting on an enquiry and you will see what he can do.

Now, Sir, let me very briefly refer to another incident of *zoolum*. It is neccessary that the House should know how in the name of civilised administration Midnapore is being ruled today. This is the original copy of an order under Defence of India Rules and hundreds of such orders have been served on men in different parts of Midnapore.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMED: On a point of order, Sir. May I know whether the case to which Dr. Mookerjee is referring is not *sub judice*?

Mr SPEAKER: That is no point of order. He is not discussing the merits of the case.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Are all these details relevant?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already said that it is relevant.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I am glad that there are still some qualms of conscience left in my friends of the Opposition. That is why they are feeling a bit nervous about these disclosures and wondering how they can possibly stand against truth and please my friends of the European Party. (Laughter.) We shall watch and see.

Now, Sir, the order states that you are to be enrolled as a special constable and your duty is to see that there is no trouble or difficulty in any part of the area where you are residing. So far so good. Then comes at the end a remark that the persons are to come to the police-station every morning at 8 o'clock. The old gentleman who has handed over this to me lives 9 miles from the police-station. He told me that every day he and others have to come to the police-station for doing nothing but just to report themselves at 8 a.m. to the officer on duty. Why? The answer is that for the defence of India this torture had to be inflicted. (Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: In your règime also this thing was done against the Muslim Leaguers.) Both of us are then in agony. So, let us combine and end this tyranny. (Laughter.) We shall also make Mr. Fazlul Huq combine with us. Will you come on!

Now, Sir, I come to the last item. This is of a very serious nature. I have here copies from the entries of complaints lodged at the police-stations. They refer only to some parts of Midnapore. There are 78 cases of alleged dacoity, robbery, theft and looting reported by persons whose properties and persons were interfered with and except in one solitray instance no action was deliberately taken by the police in respect of others. I have here details of 85 cases in which names were given and first information reports were lodged and not barring one case the police refused to investigate and to protect the lives and propeties of the persons concerned. I have also a copy of a confidential circular issued by the Superintendent of Police of Midnapore to the effect that for the time being nothing is to be done by the police if there are allegations of such a character. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Fie, fie!) You call this a civilised administration! (Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Who is at the head?) Sir John Herbert, Governor of Bengal.

Now, Sir, I shall not take more than five minutes——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. Is the reference to the confidential order allowed under the law of the land? Is it in keeping with the Official Secrets Act?

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sue Dr. Mookerjee if you can! (Laughter.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Confidential documents are of various nature. There may be confidential documents circulated to the members of this House even. I am not aware what sort of a confidential document it is. There cannot be any general rules that all confidential documents cannot be brought before this House.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, your ruling refers to confidential documents in general. But this confidential document contains an order issued by a Superintendent of Police. I just want to know whether confidential documents of Superintendents of Police can be used in this House. I want to be guided.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I am called upon to give a decision whether a certain confidential instruction issued to subordinate officers by a Superintendent of Police can be brought in under discussion in this House. I was not prepared for this thing, but my off-hand decision would be that papers which cannot in law be placed on the library table of this House should not be read in this House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? I beg to invite your ruling on my point of order which is this: the procedure of this House has to be conducted according to the rules of procedure of business of this House and this is laid down in accordance with certain sections of the Constitution Act. Points of order in this House can be raised only if the Rules of Business are infringed or the Constitution Act is infringed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, will you please resume your seat? We are hearing a very learned speech and an interesting speech or rather the most heart-rending speech of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. Unfortunately he was interrupted and a point of order was raised on which I have given my ruling. Now, I hope you of all people will not raise any point of order so as to interrupt him further.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I need not refer to that document any longer, but I would ask the Chief Minister to find out under whose orders local officers in the district of Midnapore whose duty it is to uphold law and order, are violating the elementary canons of civilised administration, I would ask the House to draw its own conclusions.

Sir, I shall just say a few words on the question of collective fines. We all know that the Ordinance was passed by the Governor-General. We all know further that the Ordinance was promulgated at a time when there was a grave emergency in many parts of the country. Whether the Ordinance was good or bad is not the subject-matter of my remarks. But knowing the facts as I do, I do maintain that there have been cases where this Ordinance has been misapplied and all that we have asked for is that there should be a review of the cases so that persons who are innocent—no matter to which class or community they may belong—should not be penalised as they cannot be penalised under the provisions of the Ordinance. Let the Chief Minister deny, if he may, if fines have not been imposed under the Governor's orders without the Ministers' concurrence. Sir, I would remind the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that even in a province which is ruled by a Governor under section 93—I mean the Province of Bihar—representations were made on behalf of the citizens and the collective fines imposed under the orders of the executive officers were not realised. I refer to the big amount which was levied on the city of Patna and the Governor of Bihar ordered that about 3 lakhs of rupees imposed on Patna should not be realised. We ask for this assurance from the Chief Minister so far as it lies in the hands of the Council of Ministers—we are not asking for the protection of those who have offended against the laws—that there will be an impartial enquiry into the allegations of unjust imposition which have been made by responsible persons and that remission or refund will be made in suitable cases.

I shall refer only to one instance, and that is the instance of Balurghat in Dinajpur. The detailed facts of that particular instance I am not going to narrate. I shall not take any more time of the House. The police there found it impossible to check the raid on Balurghat and the fact remains that the attack was mobilised not by a large section of the people of the town itself but by men who came all on a sudden from outside. A sum of Rs. 75,000 was imposed as collective fine on the small town of Balurghat. The Government of Bengal, I believe acting with the concurrence of the Governor, reduced the sum of Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 50,000. I heard only a week ago that this order was not being given effect to by the local officials. When I mentioned it to the Chief Minister, he said that it was impossible. He remembered distinctly that orders had been issued and there was no

reason why the local officials should dare act in a different manner. I have been satisfied by the information I have received that the orders of the Government have not been carried into effect and Rs. 75,000 has been realised from that particular place in spite of the orders of the Bengal Government. Does Mr. Hendry expect that the Chief Minister or any other Minister will stand up before the House and say: we are responsible for what these officers have done?

There has been a complete misunderstanding of the constitutional stand that we have taken up and I shall conclude my remarks with some general observations. We know, Sir, that there are instances where the officers are under the constitution responsible to the Ministers. In these instances the Ministers must take full responsibility as indeed they have done, unless there is any *prima facie* evidence of excesses, corruption or insubordination against them. We know, Sir, that there are spheres according to the Constitution of 1935 where the Ministers have no power to interfere with the activities of the local officials who work under the directions of the Governor of this province who is a part and parcel of the Government of Bengal. Even in these matters if the Ministers feel that the action that has been taken has been justified, let them take full responsibility, but if they feel as honest administrators that there have been cases where the officers have gone beyond the limits, have committed excesses or have done things which are not justified, would you not credit them with honesty and strength of character and will you not expect them to appear before the representatives of the people and say: we are not responsible for what has happened because the officers have acted under the direction of the Governor of Bengal or have gone beyond reasonable limits? What else can the Ministers do? The Governor of Bengal has to be shielded: he has to be shielded not personally but as a part and parcel of the Government of Bengal. Why does he not himself come here and address the House? Let him say, "I passed these orders, these were my orders, and I hold myself responsible for these actions". The orders will be passed from behind the screen in Government House or in Writers' Buildings and the Ministers have to get up and say, "We are sixteen annas responsible for what has happened." Why does not Mr. David Hendry call upon the permanent officials and the Governor of this province that in this critical time there should be closer co-operation between the Ministry and the Governor and the permanent officials, that Ministers must be saddled with both responsibility and power? These three parts can work as a team on only one condition and that condition is that there should be no clash of interests and they should regard as paramount the interests of the people of this province. But if there is any conflict of interest and if the Chief Secretary or some other officer always thinks of "rebels, rebels, rebels", then of course it will not be possible for any one to administer this province in a manner which is conducive to its real welfare and security. At this crisis, Sir, I make this appeal for co-operation to all sections of the House and I re-echo what my honourable friend Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy has said, what is the remedy? The remedy is, we must all combine and then we

can get what we want. And we can without difficulty combine during this critical period, for after all who are suffering today? Not Mr. David Hendry's camp-followers; the people who are suffering are our men, they are their men (pointing to the Opposition). If they have to be saved—whether it is a question of food, whether it is a question of protection of civil liberties—it is for us to forget our party affiliations for the time being, keep controversies aside for the present and unite on the basis of one constructive programme, and it is then and then alone that we can truly and faithfully serve the interests of the people of the province.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wonder if Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee was at all serious in his last appeal. There can be no doubt that we are most anxious to come to an agreement with Dr. Mookerjee or his group or any of those who can deliver the goods. We are very anxious, Sir, to pool all our resources and sit together for the betterment of the province but we refuse to be made pawns in a political game and we refuse to place ourselves under the subservience of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. He wishes to have us, not for the purpose of unity, but only if we can advance his own cause, namely, disunite the Muslims, so that he may pull the strings. He may have found a good pawn in the present Chief Minister of Bengal. But he will not be able to treat us in that fashion. It is not necessary for me to enter into the details, in this forum, of the attempt that we earnestly and sincerely have made for the purpose of creating a united front. Those attempts have failed and I do not wish to discuss who was responsible for the failure. But Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee may remember that I made it clear to him that he was playing with us all the time and that he had never been sincere. I still say so on the floor of this House that in spite of what Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has said here today he is not serious in his utterances. I do know that he is a great orator and a great speaker but I did not know that he is a great actor, for today he has shown not only his forensic but also his histrionic abilities.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: It is probably due to my association with you.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Probably it is due to his constant association with the Hon'ble the Chief Minister of Bengal who has from his position as Chief Minister on many occasions acted to the great amusement of us all.

Now, Sir, I will quote one sentence of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee's speech in order to define our own attitude. He uttered the sentence twice and I shall utter it twice. It is this: "There is a complete misunderstanding of the stand we have taken": "There is a complete misunderstanding of the stand we have taken". Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy has used a very harsh word with regard to Mr. Tamizuddin Khan's motion. He spoke of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, not personal of course, but of his political dishonesty. I am prepared to return that compliment tenfold to him, to Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. Sir, they have deliberately misrepresented our attitude. Never have we contended that

Government officials must be supported always, no matter whether they are right or whether they are wrong. But what we demand is that the Chief Minister or anybody responsible for the administration should come clean and declare "I consider this officer is right and I support him" or "I consider this officer is wrong and I censure him"; but he must not be permitted to say, "the officer may be right or may be wrong, but what can I do? If he is wrong I cannot appoint a Committee of Enquiry because I am helpless, because I am powerless, and because I am a sandwich". What we want is a clear-cut policy from him and this we have been demanding all along. It is absolutely dishonest on the part of these three gentlemen to assert that our viewpoint is that we must support the permanent officials, rightly or wrongly. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has discussed certain specific items. Before I deal with them I shall refer to certain demands for enquiry against officers that we ourselves made but which Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, when he was a Minister, did not concede. In Noakhali our Muslim League members were detained, interned, prosecuted—(A VOICE: And persecuted.) yes, and persecuted under the Defence of India Rules for the sole crime of criticising the Ministry. Sir, we demanded an enquiry time and again; there was no enquiry; the oppressions continued with greater vigour. Sir, this has taken place not only in the district of Noakhali but throughout Bengal. Orders have been passed by officers that we cannot publicly criticize the policy of Government or even criticize the conduct of the Ministers—a most astounding order, and order which no person with any pretence of acting constitutionally can support. We, Sir, asked for an enquiry, but did Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee agree to it? Far from it, the officer was crushing and gagging Muslims, and that was enough to secure him immunity. Sir, we are not against taking action when a *prima facie* case is made out against an officer. When we were in the Ministry there was the Kaliganj shooting case. Sir Nazimuddin at once went down to the spot himself, made enquiries; he expressed himself dissatisfied with the action of the officers, and appointed a Special Officer to make a detailed enquiry. Sir, a report was submitted by the enquiring officer but we do not know what has happened since, as we came out of office then. It is up to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and the Chief Minister to say as to what were the results of that enquiry, or whether they took any steps thereafter or shelved it. Then there was the incident at the Islamia College. We ordered a judicial enquiry. We are not averse to proceeding against officers if we think that they are wrong. I do say most definitely that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy have been most dishonest in their attacks on us and why;—because they foist on us a viewpoint which we do not possess, and then proceed to criticise it and castigate us. I can definitely tell them that what they maintain is our policy, is not the policy of the Muslim League. Yet, Sir, when I find that Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy, for whom I have very great respect for his courage of conviction, which keeps him out of office, deliberately distorts our point of view, so that he can salve his conscience, and support the Ministry, which is on the verge of a downfall, what else can I say other than this is a species of political dishonesty, when he knows

that the Ministry's policy and vaccillation on this point deserves nothing but condemnation; one, however, can understand his attitude as he is fundamentally against the constitution, but really what we cannot understand is the attitude of the Government Party who are supposed to be working this constitution. When Mr. David Hendry was delivering his speech and explaining the constitutional position—I am going to say something which will cause the opposite party to bray, I can anticipate this. Sir, I do congratulate Mr. Hendry for his well-reasoned, well-balanced speech, one of the best that has been delivered on the constitutional position on the floor of the House. (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: শালুক চিনেছেন গোপাল ঠাকুর। (Loud cries and laughter from the Progressive Party Benches and countercries from the Opposition Benches.) There you are, Sir, honourable members opposite have started braying; they may bray as much as they like——

Mr. YUSUF MIRZA: On a point of order, Sir. Is the honourable member in order in using the expression "bray"?

Mr. SPEAKER: What has surprised me is that a person of Mr. Suhrawardy's eminence has used the expression "bray".

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: All right, Sir, I will not use that expression and I withdraw it; but being ill-versed in the nuances of the English langauge, I do not know the word which will most adequately express the outburst of feeling of my friends opposite. Sir, at the time of the exposition of the constitutional position of this province by Mr. David Hendry, he was interrupted with remarks from the opposite side, that the constitution was a farce; that the Ministry had no power under the constitution. Well, Sir, if the Ministry feel that they have no power under the constitution what are they sitting there for? If you do not believe in the constitution, or if you think that the constitution is unworkable, then you must come over to this side and be in the Opposition. (Cries of "so that you can step into our shoes" from the Coalition Benches.) I know, Sir, if these gentlemen, at any rate the Muslim members opposite, obeyed their conscience and their constituencies, they would have long ago left their present party. Sir, the reason why they are still sticking to their Chief Minister is on account of the personal gains and personal favours that they have received, are receiving, and expect to receive. I may tell them that if they come over to this side their conscience will be clean, and their face will be whitened before the people. (Cries of "canvassing will not do" from the Progressive Coalition Benches.) Sir, this is politics; and I am not afraid to declare that we have been canvassing recently—and in the course of the canvassing we have come to know on what ground each individual member of the Progressive Party is supporting the Chief Minister, and we know, Sir, where the bone sticks in the throat in the case of each of those gentlemen opposite, and hence what I have said, I have said with the fullest sense of responsibility. If those gentlemen do not believe in the Constitution, if they want to deride it, and make a farce of it, let them get out. Whoever takes their place does not matter. We who have been out of office for sixteen months have grown accustomed to it; we are not anxious to get back; but sometimes

if we wish to do so, it is solely with the object of serving the province which is in dire need. We know, we are certain, that as long as those incompetent and dishonest persons are in power there is no safety for our country. We know that as long as those persons, who have slept throughout the tenure of their office, who have not tackled a single problem in Bengal, who have allowed the permanent service to carry on, and yet who do not take the responsibility for the action of the permanent service, as long as they are in power, there can be no good for this province. If you have the courage, come and do something to turn out those incompetent people who have declared themselves helpless, incompetent, impotent, every one of them.

Now, Sir, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has lectured to us on the Constitution. They have divided the constitutional position as regards responsibility for the conduct of the permanent officials into several parts, the ministerial field, cases of individual judgment and special responsibility, and agency under the Government of India Act. Sir, we know, too, what the constitutional position is, but what we demand is something more than exposition. For instance, if a Government officer takes steps under the orders of His Excellency the Governor acting in his individual judgment, and you are called upon to take the responsibility for that act, then in that case you should either accept the responsibility or disown responsibility. You are entitled to come to the floor of the House and say definitely, "here is a certain conduct for which I am not responsible," and then we cannot pillory you. But you are not permitted to sit back and say, "I am helpless, that was none of my business, and hence I shall neither accept or disown the act". This is what we expect Government to do and unless the Ministers frankly adopt this attitude, unless the Chief Minister accepts this position, which also Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has urged him to do, he has no business to be the Chief Minister of Bengal. Let him come out and say, "I accept responsibility for this and disown responsibility for that," and thereafter let him do his best. All that we want is a clear exposition.

Coming to the various incidents, we have been charged with pillorying Government because they are alleged to have stated that they differed from the Government of India in respect of its repressive policy. No, Sir. If they had said so, if they had definitely adopted that attitude, we would have known what course to adopt. They will not say anything definitely, but continuously raise clouds of dust. The Chief Minister on the floor of this House makes one pronouncement; outside he makes another. One day he signs the Hindu Mahasabha document, the next day he goes to Dacca and makes a different pronouncement. We wanted him to announce his policy on the floor of this House, but we could not get anything definite out of him. Let him say that he does not take the responsibility for the action of the Government in suppressing the Congress movement: let him say that he disagrees with the policy of the Government of India, let him say that he is merely acting as the agent of the Government of India. He cannot take up the position that he has adopted the policy, but at the same time condemn the Government of India as pursuing a wrong policy. We want a categorical statement from the Chief Minister today upon this point.

Secondly, Sir, as regards the arrest of Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee and the other members of the ministerial party to which the two *ratnas* of the Forward Bloc belong——

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On a point of order, Sir. What is the Forward Bloc in this House? Who belongs to the Forward Bloc?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: You belong to that party.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, is it open to Mr. Suhrawardy to say that?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: If the Hon'ble Minister states that he does not belong to the Forward Bloc, I certainly withdraw it. I was under the genuine impression that the members opposite who have seceded from the Official Congress Party and who occasionally go by the name of the suspended Congress, are also known as the Forward Bloc: their own paper Hindusthan Standard calls them Forward Bloc. It is for those reasons that I have said so.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Suhrawardy knows very well that I have denied and repudiated this on several occasions on the floor of this House, and only the other day the Leader of the Opposition was suing me for assistance to form another Bose-League Pact.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Why not? You are not untouchable. You have not rebelled against the Muslim League. But if you disown the Forward Bloc, I beg of you first to ask your Chief Minister to withdraw that remark from the letter which he was written to Mr. Jinnah.

Now, Sir, with regard to the arrest of Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee and others, we want the Chief Minister to let us know whether he takes the responsibility for the act, or whether he does not. Let him admit that at a party meeting Mr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, Mr. Satya Priya Banerji and others voted for the proposition that Mr. Santosh Kumar Bose and Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee should leave the Ministry after the incidents of August last; and these are the persons who were subsequently arrested. Let him assert, if he can, that he took steps to prevent their arrest, but the officers stood in his way. If he makes a statement like that we shall feel satisfied.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I correct a little mistake of Mr. Suhrawardy? Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee never belonged to the other side. He belongs to this party.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: All right, Sir. Now, with regard to Dacca Jail shooting incident, it is we ourselves who moved through our Chief Whip for the appointment of an Enquiry Committee. We censure the officers. We say a *prima facie* case has been made out. This is one of our grievances, which we are raising on the floor of the House, and we demand that the Chief Minister do appoint a Committee of Enquiry as soon as

possible. It is no use saying that he aprpoached the Chief Justice for a High Court Judge, but could not get one. He knows that the Chief Justice will not spare a sitting Judge. The Chief Minister should take steps and appoint others of the eminence of High Court Judges. If he cannot do so, let him take the House into his confidence, and tell us that although he agreed to appoint an Enquiry Committee, he has no power to do so. Thereafter if we find that he has the power but does not use it, and that he pleads helplessness merely because he wishes to stick to his office and curry favour with the Governor, then we shall know, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee will know, and Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy will know how to deal with the situation. But you cannot at one moment tell the Governor, "I am carrying out your mandate," and over here tell us "What can I do, I am helpless." We, Sir, with a largeness of heart, and taking no account of the community to which the persons who were shot at in the Dacca Jail belong, whether they were Hindus or Muslims, moved that a Committee of Enquiry be appointed, we thought that we would get similar support from all the parties over the question of an enquiry into the Kishoreganj incident. When persons 136 feet away were shot at from the road, and four of them died within the mosque, we expected that there would be a Committee of Enquiry on such a shocking incident. But again, Sir, we got no redress from the Chief Minister (Cries of "Shame! shame!" from the Muslim League benches.)

Coming to the Midnapore incidents, I consider that the facts related by Dr. Mookerjee on the floor of the House are wholly irrelevant and have nothing to do with the present issue of responsibility. But if those facts are true, if those facts have been proved, and the Chief Minister accepts them as true, then it is up to him to say why he has not appointed a Committee of Enquiry. The question we are discussing is not whether atrocities have taken place in Midnapore, the question is not whether the properties of the persons have been looted, the question is not whether atrocities have been committed which should not have been committed, the whole question is: Does the Chief Minister think that something wrong has taken place for which the local officers should be held responsibile and, if so, it is up to him to pursue the matter to its logical conclusion, or get out of office? Sir, office is and should be wholly immaterial. We have been out of office for 16 months. We have stayed away on a question of principle and we have come closer to the people, we have understood their mind, their mentality and their heart better than we did before, and we are quite happy where we are. The Muslim community is being oppressed by the Chief Minister, by Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu and others ("Question" from the Progressive Coalition Party benches.) The Muslim community is undergoing the tribulations and privations——

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: It is a downright falsehood.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No falsehood at all. You are not a member of the Muslim community. What do you know about these things? Mere humbugism won't do. The more the repression the stronger the Muslim community will be, and the more it will be able to meet the avalanche when it comes.

Sir, we have been out of office for 16 months and Mr. Fazlul Huq has asked us privately and publicly to join him, and has even offered to come over to us, but that is not the point. Office is a purely subsidiary question. What we want, Sir, is a clean, honest, brave, and courageous administration, and if the Chief Minister and his colleagues cannot give it, because they are afraid of the Governor on the one side and they are afraid of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on the other, and they wish to flatter Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy on the third, then that Government cannot last and cannot be conducted in a proper manner.

Sir, I have done. It is wholly incorrect to say, that our party has ever suggested that the officers must be supported in all matters. Sir, the Ministry owes a duty to the public to reprimand the officers when they are wrong. It owes a duty to the officers to support them when they are right, and censure them and tell them when they are wrong, so that they may behave better in future. We do not contend for a moment that Government should always support the officers whether they are right or wrong. (Loud applause from the Muslim League Opposition benches.)

Sir, after this exposition may I call upon Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy and Dr. Syamaprjasad Mookherjee to withhold their support from the Chief Minister? (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: One word, Sir. After this exposition I want to request Mr. Tamizuddin Khan to withdraw his motion of censure.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, it is only fair that what Mr. Tamizuddin Khan said should be repeated, because it is grossly unfair to impute to him terms which he has not said. You may allow him just to repeat one sentence.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can speak if you like, but what he said is already in record.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, all I want to say is this: What Mr. Tamizuddin Khan——

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, how long will the debate continue? Trams will stop shortly.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: What Mr. Tamizuddin Khan said was this "Officials so long as they loyally and faithfully carry out the policy of the Ministry and do not transgress the bounds of propriety deserve every protection from the Ministry." That is all.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last speaker Mr, Shaheed Suhrawardy has called the occupants of these benches dishonest and impotent. It is some consolation at the end of a long day to be told that we do not conform to the standards of honesty set by Mr. Suhrawardy. But as regards impotence, on all available standards Mr. Suhrawardy may very well claim credit in that respect to himself. (Laughter.) Well, I am not going to dispute that claim on his part.

Sir, I do not desire to bring this House down from the high constitutional level to which it has been raised by the different speakers who have concentrated on motion No. 2 moved by my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. I am afraid I shall have to drag this House down to hard facts from those constitutional heights when a challenge has been thrown out to me by different speakers in the Opposition with regard to the administration of the Local Self-Government Department.

To deal with the observations of my esteemed friend Sir Henry Birkmyre with regard to the delay which has been caused in the publication of the Bill relating to the Howrah Improvement Trust I plead guilty to the charge that sufficient headway has not been made in the matter. I should remind my friend that the preparation of a Bill is a long-drawn process, particularly when it concerns the creation of an Improvement Trust for an important city like Howrah. The Bill was framed more than a year ago; it had to pass through the scrutiny of Mr. Gurner, the Chairman of the Improvement Trust. He suggested various amendments in various respects which had to go to the Legislative Department more than once, and it is now almost ready to pass through the Cabinet in its final form and to be published by the middle of April next. I hope that will satisfy my honourable friend that in spite of our best intentions it was not possible for us to expedite the publication of this Bill. At the same time I might tell him that the mere publication of the Bill will not improve matters in Howrah all at once and the overwhelming necessities of the war will stand in the way of one single effective step being taken for the purpose of improving this area. Everything is wanting at the present moment; there is not an ounce of road metal; there is not one single road-roller available; there is not a single ounce of cement; and in these circumstances the mere publication of the Bill and the passing of the Bill into law will not bring the desired millennium to the Howrah area for which everybody is longing, most of all the Local Self-Government Department of the Government of Bengal.

Now, Sir, coming to the speech delivered by my friend Mr. Hirtzel, it has never been my misfortune to hear from the European benches a speech so utterly devoid of any constructive suggestion. We have been accustomed to listen to the speeches from that bench on matters of constructive policy giving suggestions which are readily acceptable or which are at least capable of being given consideration. Unfortunately, Mr. Hirtzel's speech was an ill-informed one in that he sought to heap upon the Government of Bengal the responsibility for all the ills that prevail in the administration of the municipalities—their day-to-day administration—which are certainly not the charge of the Government of Bengal. The delay which was caused in the publication of the annual report is nothing new in that department. That has been the practice all along in previous years, not because of any delay in the department but because of the delay which is caused by the local officials—the Commissioners and others—in sending up their reports on which the official report is compiled by the Government. The Commissioners and the District Magistrates are an overworked lot, and you cannot expect that they will sit down and ruminate upon what has been done by

local bodies. That is considered more or less an unimportant piece of work in these times. That was the reason why no special hurry was made in the publication of this report in these strenuous times. My friend Mr. Hirtzel has also cirticised my department on the ground that nothing has been done in the way of improving the situation so far as the local bodies are concerned. Well, there are various defects which require to be removed. Most of all a close supervision has got to be instituted and maintained in the work of these local bodies. I may inform my friend that a decision was taken by Government for the appointment of a Local Self-Government Officer for the whole of Bengal. It is eminently necessary that a departmental head should be constituted for the Local-Self-Government Department. The Medical Department has got its head of the Department, so also the Public Health Department has got its head, but none in the Local Self-Government Department. It is necessary that for the purpose of instituting a systematic, persistent and well-maintained watch and supervision a Local Self-Government Officer should be appointed with a small staff to be called upon to go round, inspect, criticise and advise and to see that this advice is implemented. The only scrutiny that is now made is by the auditors appointed by the Accountant-General, Bengal, and their audit notes are honoured more by ignoring them than otherwise. That is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. But the exigencies of the war have stood in the way of any new move in this direction. I might invite my friend's attention to a Cabinet decision arrived at within two or three months of the new Ministry coming into office. The Cabinet decision has laid down that no long-term scheme will be taken up during this war which does not relate to the prosecution of the war. In these circumstances, however much I might have wished to give a new turn to the affairs of the Local Self-Government Department, my hands were absolutely tied, and I fully agree with my honourable friend that nothing much has been done. It has not been done in spite of our best intentions, it has not been been done because of the overwhelming necessities of the war; it has not been done because every other work was made to take a back seat. That is the reason why this forward move in the nation-building department has not been taken up much to my regret and much to my dissatisfaction. But there is no help for it. We have got to face the situation, and we must submit to it.

Then coming to the question of the removal of the chairmen of district boards, I do not desire to trouble the House with any attempt to answer the allegations which have been put forward by my honourable friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan with regard to the Faridpur District Board. That has figured so often on the floor of this House in questions and supplementary questions that most valuable information has already been made available to the members of this House as to the reasons which actuated the Government in taking the steps that have been taken. I do not want to assist my friend or my friend's friend, by supplying materials for the contemplated suit with which we have been threatened. When the time comes, the real facts may have to be stated at the proper place if it comes to that at all. So far as Government are concerned, they are perfectly able and

willing to defend the position not only on facts but also on law if the time comes and when it does come. As regards the Dacca District Board, Sir, I am sorry that my friend Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali has thought fit to raise this question on the floor of the House at this stage. I can tell him that only preliminary steps have been taken. (Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Why?) I will tell him why, and very effectively too. Only preliminary steps have been taken, not on flimsy grounds of the appointment of a typist or dismissal of a clerk as Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali seeks to represent to the House, but for reasons of which these incidents are mere indications. (Cries of "Oh! oh!" from the Opposition benches, and laughter.) My friends will kindly hold their souls in patience, and they need not lose themselves in a laughter of satisfaction at this stage.

Now, Sir, so far as this district board is concerned, we have only given them notice to show cause why it should not be superseded because a very strong *prima facie* case has been made out at this stage. We do not want to give notice of such supersession in every case, not unless we are satisfied that the necessity is so overwhelming that it cannot be resisted. In this case a representation from eleven members of the district board, six of whom are Muslims and five Hindus, was made to the Government of Bengal as far back as September last. Government did not take any steps thereon beyond sending it down to the local officers, namely, the Commissioner of the Division and the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate, Mr. Llewellyn, carried out a very close and intensive investigation into the whole affair; he went to the District Board office more than once; he gave the Chairman all opportunity of representing his case with regard to each allegation seriatim and discussed the whole question with him. Thereafter he drew up a report dealing with the allegations—a report which runs to eighteen closely typewritten pages. If you look to the report you will be convinced of the way in which the administration of the district board was being carried on. Sir, I do not want to convince anybody at this stage about the necessity of superseding the district board for our mind is perfectly open. And I cannot understand why the mover of this cut motion has brought this matter up at this stage and has tried to anticipate events. It is our intention to give this body a chance to give its explanation and satisfy the Government that these allegations are not true—allegations which have been made in the report of the District Magistrate on the basis of which recommendations have been made by the Commissioner. What are those allegations? One is that a majority rule of a most unconstitutional character has been established in this district board to the detriment of the district and the district board itself. The allegation is not as Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali wanted to put it, namely, persistent neglect of duty and incompetence—allegations that are necessary under the law to be substantiated in the case of the removal of a chairman. But this is a case of supersession of the district board and the charge against it is one of abuse of power by establishing a majority rule of the worst character. On that point, Sir, I will refer to the District Magistrate's charge against the district board's abuse of power.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order. Is the Hon'ble Minister entitled to quote from the District Magistrate's letter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not quoting from the letter; I am only summarising it.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. Unless the Hon'ble Minister is prepared to make available the document to us he cannot refer to it.

Mr. SPEAKER: But certainly he can summarise the contents of the document and that he is going to do.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: But, Sir, I submit he cannot refer to any document which is not the property of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Fazlur Rahman, I know the convention on that point. My ruling is that he is perfectly entitled to summarise without quoting the document; but if he read a part of the document, then, of course, you can claim that the whole of it must be read out.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I am not going to read anything from the letter. I am going to say what the District Magistrate has said in a summary form.

With regard to the passing of the budget, Sir, the District Magistrate has referred to the consideration of the budget by the Commissioner when it came up before him. The Commissioner on that occasion characterised that budget as a "train-catching budget." That famous expression which will be almost a classic expression in the history of local administration was used by Mr. Larkin. It was very clear according to the District Magistrate that the meeting which discussed a budget of 52 printed pages could not in any way do justice to its task in 90 minutes. It was very clear that the budget was prepared by the majority party and rushed through by the majority party without the slightest consideration of the opinion of the minority party and with a shocking disregard of the ordinary decencies of democratic practice. The reason for this undignified scampering, according to the District Magistrate, was the desire of certain M. L. As., members belonging to the chairman's party, to catch the 11-30 train to enable them to reach Calcutta in time. That is why he has called it a train-catching budget. It might have been argued, according to the District Magistrate, that even if a month had been taken for the discussion, the bludgeon methods of the chairman's party was such that the result would have been just the same, but it could have given an example with a view to at least depriving the Opposition of having anything to say. The District Magistrate considered that in respect of the budget meeting the chairman and his party relied on their strength and not on the justice of their proposals. The District Magistrate is of opinion that the party's handling of the affair was undignified, selfish, irresponsible and inimical to the interests of the Dacca District Board only to oblige a handful of the supporters of the chairman's own party.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of order, Sir. Does the Hon'ble Minister still maintain that he is not reading from the letter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: No, I am not reading; but if it is unpleasant to Mr. Suhrawardy, I may tell him that it was the doing of his own party men and it can't be helped.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it has been my lot since 1913, when first I became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council to have to make speeches and to take part in discussions sometimes defending the Government policy and Government measures, but more often as a member of the Opposition criticising the administration and the administrative policy. To-night, Sir, I have appeared before this House not so much as a defender of Government policy but by way of explanations as to what I have done, as to what I have left undone and as to whether I have been a mere showboy of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, or that I have had a personality of my own and that during the very difficult times through which the country has passed whether I have been able to do anything to carry on the administration not according to the wishes of Mr. Suhrawardy and his friends but according to the standards of British rule and British administration in this country. I ask my friends of the European Group to remember that the very day on which we assumed office in the new Cabinet, the Japanese have been overrunning the Philippine Islands, and we had not even been a couple of months in office when the Japanese overran the Malaya Peninsula and overran Burma. Sir, with the booming of enemy guns at our very door, with an economic crisis of an unprecedented character and with military exigencies unparallelled in the history of this country for several centuries we were asked to carry on the administration as Ministers of the Crown surrounded by enemies, surrounded by unsympathetic critics, and I may add, not even helped by friends who could sympathise with us in our difficulties, but by critics who did not take note of events, but knew only how to embarrass us in order that the administration might topple and fall down to make room for aspirants after the Ministry who are here to give examples of self-efacement, but whose hearts are rankling under the agony of despair and who have been anxious if by some means or other we could be induced to quit office in order to enable them to come and occupy these benches. Sir, my friend the Leader of the European Party has very kindly hinted that if I find it impossible to carry on my work as a Minister I ought to resign and go into wilderness. I have not had the pleasure of personal friendship with the Leader of the European Group for very long, but I take this opportunity of even the little acquaintance I have had with him to remind him that during the long span of over 40 years that I have been in public life I have never gone into wilderness, and if life is spared to me I shall never go into wilderness, and if at any time this Ministry breaks and I go out of office I shall drag others into wilderness and if by any chance I have to go into wilderness I shall be in glorious company, because I shall drag into wilderness the highest personages in the land—European or Indian, official or non-official.

I have it in my power, Sir, if I so desire and if I am not hampered by the limitations of office to summon to the Town Hall even today half of Calcutta in order to support me in my administrative measures and the manner in which the work of the State has been carried on. Sir, I do not brag or boast, but I have been forced to use these words because of the calumny in which my critics have indulged. I at the present moment am neither faltering nor fumbling as a Minister of the Crown, but I am prepared to take the fullest responsibility of office, prepared to take the fullest responsibility for the acts of officials in so far as I find that these officials have carried on their duties true to the traditions of British rules, true to the traditions of humanity, justice, equity and righteousness. Sir, while I am prepared to take the fullest responsibility for the action of officials, while I am prepared to give them the utmost possible protection for what they might have done in carrying on the ministerial policy and the dictates of the Government, I want to make it clear that I do not wish to encourage the idea that officials, Indians or Europeans, can flout public opinion and that in the discharge of their duties they can trample the ordinary rights and liberties of human beings. I wish to make my position absolutely clear. No one can ask any Minister in any civilized country to come forward with a declaration that anything and everythng that an official may do will be supported and will be accepted by the Minister in charge. The relation between a Minister and the permanent official is more or less like the relation which exists in law between a master and a servant. The master is responsible for the acts of the servant in so far as the servant acts legitimately in the exercise of his duties, but if the servant goes out of his way and does something which does not fall within the legitimate sphere of his duties, I do not think there is any law, human or otherwise, which can demand of the master that he shall stand by the servant and defend him merely because he is an employer and the servant is an employee. I will make this position absolutely clear.

It is not true, as Mr. Suhrawardy was trying to point out, that I have ever said that I am helpless. I never say that I am helpless. I only point out the difficulties under which I have been working. Cases have occurred in which I have passed orders, but somehow or other that order has been intercepted by some political Mercury, a messenger of God, and that order never descended on earth. These things have happened not because I am powerless and not because I lay the responsibility at the door of others, but because things have happened which I do not at the present moment entirely approve, things have happened which no Minister, no responsible Minister can conscientiously stand up and support as his own. There are cases and there are cases. I will just give a few instances.

Now, Sir, references have been made in course of the speeches to various events that have taken place and with regard to which members of the Opposition have taken up an attitude entirely inconsistent with the motion that has been moved by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. Sir, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan wants to censure the Government for the failure of the Ministry to assume responsibility for the action of the officers of Government. Does my honourable friend mean that the Ministry is here to assume responsibility

for all the actions of all the officials of Government at all times under all circumstances, whether those actions can really be justified or not? Now, Sir, this motion as worded is as ambiguous and as fallacious as the well-known query which is put, "Have you given up beating your mother?" You cannot say either "yes" or "no" to it, because it is an obvious logical fallacy. No Ministry can assume responsibility for all the acts of all the officials, nor can any Minister disown responsibility for the acts of the officials of Government. (Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We are all agreed.) If you are, hear something of the constitutional position. Now, Sir, as is well known, and I am only referring to it by way of introduction, there are three cases of constitutional relationship between the Ministers and the Governor. There are cases which come clearly under the ministerial field. There are cases in which the Governor exercises his individual judgment; and there are cases in which the Governor acts in his discretion.

Now, the permanent officials in carrying out their duties either carry out those duties in pursuance of the policy formulated by the Ministers in their own responsibility and in their own ministerial spheres, or they carry out their duties in cases in which the Governor has either accepted the ministerial advice or has overruled the ministerial advice and has acted in his individual judgment, or they carry out the policy of the Governor in those cases in which the Governor has acted solely in his own discretion.

Sir, there is a fourth class of cases which come into the picture in consequence of the war, namely, the cases covered by section 126 of the Government of India Act as amended to meet the exigencies of the war situation by virtue of which the Government of India can impose its will and ask things to be carried out by the Provincial Government and its Governor as the agent of the Central Government.

Now, Sir, in the first class of cases it is obvious that the Ministers formulating the policy must go the whole hog and support the officers who carry out their policy unless of course there is some flagrant breach of discipline, unless there is some flagrant breach of the rules of the administration, unless something has happened which makes it absolutely impossibe for the Ministry to support the actions of the permanent officials. In the first class of cases which at the present moment are by far the largest number of cases we the Ministers formulating the policy are prepared, have always been prepared, and shall be prepared to support the permanent officials in carrying out the policy that we have laid down. In the second class of cases two things may happen. The Governor may accept the advice and then the orders that are issued in the name of the Governor are orders which have been approved by the Governor in concurrence with the advice of the Ministers, or it may be that the Governor has not been able to accept the advice of the Ministers and has acted in his individual judgment. In those cases also the Ministers must be prepared to support the permanent officials unless of course it becomes difficult to support them in consequence of what they may have done which is outside the legitimate scope of their duties. The same is the case with the third class of cases. As regards the

fourth class of cases the Provincial Government has practically got no option but to carry out the policy and there also the Ministers must take the responsibility because otherwise the wishes and the mandates of the Central Government cannot be carried out.

Now let me descend to particular instances. Take the case of the much debated incident in the Dacca Jail, otherwise known as the Dacca Jail shooting incident. We all know that something extraordinary happened on that occasion. Speeches after speeches were made which gave most harrowing tales as to what happened there and my friend Mr. Suhrawardy used the expresion that "human beings have been shot down like rabbits." There was a demand from all sides of the House that there should be an enquiry into the incident of the Dacca Jail. My friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan in asking the House to accept his motion wants the Ministers to say, "Here we are. We assume responsibility for what was done by the Superintendent of the Jail." Why? We will not hold any enquiry, because that will affect the morale of the administration.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Was the Chief Minister sleeping when I was speaking?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Keep quiet. If you can't understand please sit down quietly and try to understand.

Now coming to the Dacca Jail shooting incident there was a demand for an enquiry. Why? There should be no enquiry. The Ministers have taken responsibility for what the Jail Superintendent has done? We cannot have an enquiry. Sir, at that time it suited my friends to demand an enquiry into the incident of the Dacca Jail because they thought that the Ministers would be placed in a very awkward position, but now it suits them to say that the Ministers must take responsibility for the incident thereby implying that the demand for an enquiry into the Dacca Jail incident was unjustified.

Let us now come to the case of the shooting at Kishoreganj mosque. There again I must either take responsibility for what the District Magistrate and the Subdivisional Officer have done and what happened there or disown responsibility and punish them for what they have done. Now my friends are on the horns of a dilemma, not one or two horns, but several horns (laughter), and Mr. Suhrawardy—I hope he will not lose his temper—is trying to put words in my mouth which I never uttered. He is trying to justify the constitutional position which I never formulated and he is trying to confuse the issues by interruping me in the midst of my speech.

Now, Sir, let me come to Mr. Tamizuddin Khan's motion. Motion No. 2 is about failure of the Ministry to assume responsibility for the actions of the officers of Government. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan goes on to censure Government for failure to implement the promise given by the Chief Minister for the appointment of an enquiry committee to enquire into the alleged excesses committed by the permanent officials in the district of Midnapore. Why should there be an enquiry? The Ministers must take responsibility for what has been done. I must take the responsibility. I

can understand my friend Mr. Hendry when he says that I must take responsibility for the acts of permanent officials. I take it to mean that having formulated a policy or having been a Member of Government which have formulated a policy, it is the duty of the Ministers to support the officials while they are carrying out that policy. This certainly means that the actions of the permanent officials must be within the legitimate scope of their duties, and so long as this condition is satisfied, a Minister is not worthy of his salt if he does not stand up and support the permanent officials who are carrying out that policy.

Now, Sir, take another case which is absolutely within the ministerial sphere, the case for instance of the removal of rice or the purchase of rice by Government agents. We laid down the policy or the Governor acted in his own individual judgment or in his discretion with or without the advice of the Ministers. We are certainly bound to support the permanent officials who carry out that policy; but supposing a particular official at a particular place behaves in such a way that there is an uproar for what he has been doing, if there are complaints from all parts of the country for the manner in which he has been carrying out his duties, can it be said legitimately that the Ministers must take responsibility for what the permanent official has been doing in the mufassil? My friend Mr. Hendry has made a speech sitting here in Calcutta being imperfectly acquainted with the state of things in the mufassil, unacquainted with the manner in which things are carried on in the distant mufassil. Things are carried on by permanent officials who take advantage of their position in order to do things which are utterly inconsistent even with elementary principles of administration. There is no justification for that.

Sir, there are good officers; there are also bad officers. But good officers constitute the largest possible number. There are one or two who are not as good as the rest and when they do something which raises public uproar, you cannot expect the Minister to stand up and say "I take responsibility for what has been done".

A remark has been made about the incident that took place in Calcutta immediately after the 8th August. The Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party issued a notice asking people to mention instances in which their friends or relatives had met either with fatal accidents or with injuries. The reason was not to find out how many instances there were but to let us know in how many instances we should give allowance, support, help or assistance to the survivors, friends and relations of the deceased or injured persons. It is for that reason that we wanted to know the number.

I now come once again, Sir, to the question of responsibility. What is the present constitution? Sir, I remember the days when we began the Minto-Morley Reforms. What they call the permanent Civil Service, sometimes known as the steel-frame, is the outcome and growth of over a century and a half which has crystallized it into a system which is without any parallel in any administration in any part of the world. They have got their own privileges and, may I add, even their own prejudices. They have

got their own way of thinking and their own way of doing things. The difference between now and the year 1912 when the Minto-Morley Reforms were first introduced is this that whereas at that time the members of Government—the members of the Executive Council—were irresponsible heads of departments, at the present moment the Ministers are responsible to the Legislature and removable from office by an adverse vote. Now the permanent officials who carry out the orders of Government are not responsible to the House. They carry out their duties according to the old traditions. It may be that the manner in which they carry out those duties does not commend itself to the people. In former days the people could not express their will in the Legislature because they were not represented by their representatives in the House. But at the present moment if a permanent official does something which does not commend itself to the people, the people can through their representatives in the House take into account the Minister who is in charge of the department. The position is that although the Minister is not really the author of what has been done and he is not really the actual person who has done it, he is, at the same time, responsible to the Legislature as if it was his own hand that has done the deed to which exception has been taken. If that is the position, what has happened by the new reforms is that there have been changes at the top, but the lower strata of Government consisting of permanent officials remains the same—unmoved and unmovable—and the same system goes on just as the Ganges and the Brahmaputra have been flowing on for ages and ages. There have been no changes in the lower strata but in the upper strata we have got rid of the Executive Councillors and put the poor Ministers in their places. They are removable by the votes of the Legislature. The Ministers, therefore, have got to support the permanent officials and also support their supporters in the Assembly. But, Sir, there are difficulties in the way. It is not that I say that we are helpless, but there are difficulties in the way. It is not that I say that we are helpless, but there are difficulties which cannot be ignored.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Won't you take up the other cut motions?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have now got to say a few words about the collective fines. I have already pointed out that these collective fines have been imposed under an Ordinance promulgated by the Governor-General under emergent circumstances and extended to Bengal during a period when public order and tranquility were gravely threatened. It has been applied to Bengal in several instances under the direction of the Governor acting in his special responsibility. I must say that I feel greatly impressed by the argument advanced by various speakers that cases where collective fines have been imposed may be reviewed on the ground of return of normal times and there have been admittedly cases where the Ordinance has been more or less wrongly applied. As regards the fines that have been actually imposed and the cases to which exception has been taken by my friend Dr. Sanyal, we have found that the total

amount is realised from those persons who are not exempted and this is clear from the terms of Section 3(*iii*) of the Ordinance which lays down that the fine shall be apportioned among the inhabitants who are liable collectively to pay. Instances have occurred in which it has been proved that an individual who has been assessed and in some cases has paid his fine is entitled to be excused, but in these cases, the fine is remitted and reimbursed and there is no reassessment upon other persons liable in consequence. The fact is that the total amount recoverable is proportionately reduced. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This is not the case about Beldanga.) As regards Beldanga the honourable member knows more than I do. But I have promised that there are certain matters which I shall look into. But I should ask the House to remember that these are matters which are the special responsibility of the Governor and the final decision of Government must await consideration by the Cabinet. Meanwhile, if I receive applications of distinct cases we will try to see what relief can be given. But, Sir, collective fines are collective fines. They are meant more or less for an emergency and at a time when they were imposed, there was no other alternative for Government but to impose those fines. Let us hope, Sir, that normal times have been restored never to be disturbed by lawlessness again and if the present state of things continues, we may be able to advise His Excellency the Governor to review these cases and to give relief to the extent to which it is desired by members of this House. But, once again let me remind the House that this matter attracts the special responsibility of the Governor and I am not authorised to make any promises because it is a matter not within the Ministerial responsibility. Sir, if we are impressed that cases have been made out which we may recommend to the Governor we will do that, but I have to defend the imposition of collective fines because, as I have said, we have no other alternative but to carry out the orders conveyed to us through the Governor and which is absolutely necessary in the exigencies of the situation in which we have been placed at present. I do not know if I have failed to deal with any of the cut motions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about Home Guard?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is much better that we should go home now instead of dealing with Home Guard (laughter).

As regards Home Guard we have heard criticisms of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, not once, not twice but several times. The Home Guard organisation is not what we originally intended it to be. I think that we are all agreed, officials or non-officials, Indians or non-Indians, that the Home Guard must be placed on a high standard of efficiency and we are with that object in view looking into the matter. I hope before long we shall be able to do something which will make the Home Guard very useful and attractive. There is only one word more which I have got to say regarding an enquiry into the Midnapore affair. The position is this: when I made that statement we had to consult the Military authorities, and there is nothing in law to prevent any one who is aggrieved and who has got to make any

complaint to go to the Magistrate and make his complaint personally. If he does that the Magistrate is bound under the Criminal Procedure Code to make an enquiry. What we have decided with the approval of the Military authorities is that a Special Magistrate will be appointed who will have the power to receive complaints; this is nothing unusual, this is a right of every citizen, and if the Magistrate on enquiry finds that there is sufficient material collected to go before a tribunal, the tribunal will be set up as early as possible. I hope there will be no more criticisms about Midnapore incidents and Midnapore tribunal. We have done what we thought to be our duty and the Ministry feel that there is justification for an enquiry even now in the interests of the officials.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMED: What about the food problem?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must say something about the food problem. People who talk about food do not know what the problem actually is. As regards food what the Ministers have done is to allow the fullest liberty to the officials to carry out the policy which has been laid down and approved by the Government of India and we do not think it advisable or proper to interfere in the working of the permanent officials in this respect. It may be that the permanent officials may take steps which may not be liked by others. (Cries of "Ha! ha" from the Opposition Benches.) It is no question of "ha, ha" or "ho, ho", but it is a question of facts and the permanent officials were faced with a situation of extreme difficulty. It was a new situation altogether; various factors were responsible for taking rice out of Bengal and rendering Bengal a deficit province. It is not the Ministers who are responsible for this price of rice at Rs. 26 per maund as they are no more responsible for the Japanese war and what has been happening in Europe to-day. (Cries of "Shame, shame" from the Opposition Benches.) No amount of shouting will induce us to give up office.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: You ought to be responsible for the food situation.

The motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—86.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali)
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Raschid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Masud Kazi.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Barma, Babu Premhari
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.

Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhut Bano Khanam, Begum
Faziul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi
Faziur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca)
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib
Hamilton, Mr. K. A.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers
Hendry, Mr. David
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hodge, Mr. H. R.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E.
Jalaluddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib (Tippera)
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra
Mandal, Mr. Jogendra Nath
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behary
Mullick, Mr. Pulin Behary
Musharruff Hossain, Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Nazimuddin Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Norton, Mr. H. R.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji
Sahebe-Alam, Mr. Syed
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, Mr. H. S.
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Tamizuddin Khan, Mr.
Thorman, Mr. C. M.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

NOES—116.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna)
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh)
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah)
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh)
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Banerji, Mr. P.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit
Barman, Babu Syama Prosad
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan
Das, Mr. Monmohan
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira
Faziul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi
Gomes, Mr. R. A.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.

Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukherjea, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Mukherjee, Mr. B.
Mukherji, Dr. H. C.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi
Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra
Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar
Roy, Mr. Kishori Pati
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath
Roy, Mr. Patiram
Roy, Shib Shekhareswar, Kumar
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath
Sen-gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi
Yousuf Mirza
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 86 and the Noes 116, the motion was lost.

(The result was greeted with table thumpings and cries of "Fazlul Huq Zindabad" from the Coalition Party benches.)

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—18.

Banerji, Mr. P.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad
Mukherji, Mr. B.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath
Sen-Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan
Sur, Mr Harendra Kumar
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan

NOES—101.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna)
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh)
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah)
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh)
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi
Abul Quasem, Maulvi
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath

Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan
Chaudhuri, Rai Narendra Nath
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan
Das, Mr. Monmohan
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi
Gomes, Mr. R. A.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers
Hendry, Mr. David
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi
Mukherji, Dr. H. C.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra
Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath
Roy, Mr. Patiram
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Thorman, Mr. C. M.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yousuf Mirza
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 18 and the Noes 101, the motion was lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question before the House is the motion No. 10 moved by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The rule requires that the motion has to be read out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you want that the subject on which the motion has been moved should be read out?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, Sir. Otherwise it will not be recorded.

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be recorded as usual. The question before the House is motion No. 10 moved by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I would humbly request you to read out the matter on which the motion is moved, namely, the failure to

give effect to the scheme for reorganisation of the "Home Guards" for the rural areas in Bengal, so as to make the same representative of popular organisations and parties.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Nawabzada K. Nasarullah that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerjee that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Jagat Chandra Mandal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Sir Henry Birkmyre that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question before the House is motion No. 26 moved by Mr. Hirtzel.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: In view of the assurance given by the Hon'ble Minister, Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The motion of Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then by leave of the House withdrawn.

The motion of Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali that the demand of Rs. 1,29,38,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The main motion of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq that a sum of Rs. 1,29,38,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration" was then put and agreed to.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is now quarter past ten and I do not think it would be convenient for honourable members if they are asked to assemble again at 10 o'clock in the morning to-morrow. Besides, I understand that there will be a Cabinet meeting to-morrow from 10-30 a.m. to 1-30 p.m. In the circumstances I would request you to be good enough to adjourn the House till some time in the afternoon to-morrow. What I want is that there should not be any morning session to-morrow in view of our being here so late in the night to-day.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 10-15 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 25th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 25th March, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (The Hon'ble Mr. Syed NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 6 Hon'ble Ministers and 194 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Recommendation of the Chaukidary Enquiry Committee.

***205. Maulvi MD. ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to give effect to the recommendation of the Chaukidary Enquiry Committee, with regard to the contribution of rupees forty lakhs by the Provincial Government for the maintenance of the rural Police?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when it is to be given effect to?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): I refer the honourable member to paragraph 3 of resolution No. 408Pl., dated the 14th February, 1942, a copy of which was forwarded to each member of this House. No decision has yet been reached upon this point on which, moreover, Government have not yet had the assistance which they expected to receive from the comments which it was expected that the Report would produce.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what sort of assistance they expected from the comments of the report?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no question.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: My point is that the recommendations have not been given effect to. The Hon'ble Minister says that a copy of the resolution has been forwarded to each member and Government could not come to a decision due to the fact that they did not receive the assistance which they expected.

Mr. SPEAKER: That means they expected some suggestions.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We expected constructive suggestions.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if they do not find any comments on the resolution that they have circulated, it is the desire of the Government not to give-effect to the recommendations of the Committee and also that they will not take any action on the resolution that has been circulated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, we will try to give effect to the recommendations.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Is it a fact that no comment has been made by any member whatsoever?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say. I have not got the papers with me.

Paper production in Bengal.

***206. Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department aware of the fact that there is a dire scarcity of paper in the market?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether any steps have been taken by Government to solve the problem; and

(*ii*) whether any scheme for production of paper in large scale in Bengal is under consideration?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of placing the scheme before the House? If so, when?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) With a view to promote the manufacture of hand-made paper as a partial solution of the problem, a scheme for testing the commercial possibilities of its manufacture has been in operation since 1941. Although the investigations are not yet complete, results obtained so far have been encouraging, specimen papers of different types have been approved for certain Defence Service purposes and the cost of production has been found to be competitive under the present market conditions. A scheme for demonstration and training of skilled workers is at present under consideration.

(*ii*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: What is the total quantity of paper that Government will be able to produce by the indigenous manufacture?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: That depends upon the operation of the scheme. If more persons take up the work as home industry, larger quantity may be produced.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: What is the intention of Government in this matter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The intention of the Government is to form three demonstration parties who will move from district to district, train the young men and ask them to adopt this hand-made manufacturing of papers as home industries.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what amount is estimated for the manufacture of hand-made paper in the years 1941 and 1942?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice. For the present scheme I can say that there is an estimate of Rs. 22,000 for three demonstration parties for training of young men.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many young men were trained for the manufacture of hand-made paper and where?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have said that three demonstration parties have been formed who will now take up the work of training young men. Up till now only the department itself has made experiments with its own experts.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Is the Government aware that in the Khadi Pratisthan the experiment in hand-made paper has proved successful?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already said that this will be successful. From our own departmental experiment it has been found that we can produce hand-made paper from paddy straw at a cost of Rs. 10 per ream, that is, 500 sheets, whereas in the market its price is Rs. 20. If it can be taken up on a large scale it will be successful.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the demonstration parties that he has just now spoken of may be available for the mofussil areas and also when the training of skilled workers may be taken up by the Government?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have already submitted that the scheme is now before the Government. If it gets the sanction of the Finance Department, the work will be taken up in a month.

Babu MADHUSUDHAN SARKAR: How long will the Government take to consider that scheme?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered that question.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any hand-made paper is available in the market now?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I have got specimens of various kinds. If the honourable member wants to see some, I can hand them over.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any experiment has been made as cottage industry to see that this hand-made paper will be a successful business?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, it will be taken up as home industry.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Whether experiments have been made anywhere?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, not yet.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there was a scheme for manufacture of hand-made paper from water-hyacinth, and, if so, what was the result? Has that proved successful?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Various experiments were made from water-hyacinth, old papers and rags, etc., but after experiments this paper from paddy straw has proved to be successful and that will be able to compete in the market.

Rai Sahib ANUKUL CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please ask the Industries Department to take it up as cottage industry?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, certainly.

Alleged purchase of foodstuffs by Government for refugees from Arakan.

***207. Maulvi AHMED HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that 50,000 Arakanese refugees have been ordered to be placed at "Katabari", police-station Gobindaganj, district Rangpur;

(*ii*) that huge quantities of rice, paddy and other foodstuffs are being locally purchased by Government and stored for feeding those refugees besides purchases by agents of the Supply Department of Government;

(*iii*) that the district of Rangpur, especially Gaibandha subdivision, where the refugees have been ordered to be placed, is deficit with regard to paddy and rice; and

(*iv*) that a serious situation causing starvation to hundreds of people has already arisen in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the subdivision due to non-availability of paddy and rice?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the situation is due to the purchase of rice and paddy amongst other things?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) No, some refugees, but their number is likely to be considerably less than what the honourable member seems to think.

(*ii*) No purchase of rice or paddy or other foodstuffs has been effected locally up to date for feeding the refugees either by the Directorate of Civil Supplies or by any other Government agency.

(*iii*) Accurate information on this point is not available because there is no reliable data regarding *per capita* actual consumption.

(*iv*) Government are aware that, in common with many other districts, shortage of rice supplies is being experienced in those parts of the Rangpur district which are mentioned by the honourable member.

(*b*) In view of the reply to (*ii*) above, the question does not arise.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*a*) (*iv*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there was any shortage of supply felt by the locality?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is the answer given in the revised reply.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), what is the number of refugees that have arrived or are expected to arrive at Katabari as specified in (*a*) (*i*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend has really asked me two questions. As regards the number expected to arrive, that nobody knows, and as regards the number actually arrived, that number, I am afraid, I cannot disclose.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the local price of rice has gone up very high, because of the competition exercised by the refugees who are in a position to spend a very high price for their foodstuffs as they are pampered by the Government of India?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know, Sir, whether they are pampered vampires of the empire, but so far as I know rice which was purchased for these refugees was purchased on behalf of the Government of India, but not purchased locally and rice was purchased from Calcutta, Dacca and other districts of Bengal and from some other provinces, but not locally.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state at what price this rice was purchased from the areas other than the locality and what is the rate prevailing in the locality?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise out of the present one.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, I cannot answer the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am confining myself to the main question. Sir, the reply given by the Hon'ble Minister was that so far as the refugees were concerned, the demand of the refugees was met by purchase from outside. The areas also have been mentioned, namely, Calcutta, Dacca, and outside Bengal. That being so, my question is what was the price at which the Controller of Supplies purchased rice for the refugees?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, I cannot answer the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the Controller purchased rice at a price near about Rs. 23 per maund?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Not at the date of the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Date of the answer?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The date of the answer is one which is six weeks old.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to (*a*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what basis Gaibandha has been selected for the posting of these refugees?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am unable to answer the question. It is a question which does not primarily concern the Provincial Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is considering the desirability of setting up one uniform machinery of purchases either on behalf of the Government of India or on behalf of the Provincial Government for either local consumption, or for refugee consumption or for military consumption, so that there may be one uniform price level maintained?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The suggestion made by my honourable friend will certainly be borne in mind. Sir, I beg leave of the House to make a statement in order to avoid misunderstandings that would be both discouraging and harmful. Press reports appearing today of proceedings in the other House may be taken to indicate that the pending imports of rice into Bengal are 2 lakhs maunds from Orissa and 10,000 maunds from Bihar. These maunds have nothing to do with the present imports. Owing to the speed with which the situation changes, answers to questions on current affairs relating to the Civil Supplies Department are liable to be out of date by the time they are given. The figures given related to arrangements made in the earlier half of January and have no relation with present large-scale arrangements made by the Central Government. As I have previously stated the quantities now involved are very substantial and will benefit not only Calcutta, but Bengal as a whole. The Central Government are operating on a large scale and at a high speed

and I know that it is their intention that these operations will embrace the rice-growing regions of Eastern India as a whole and the burden may be fairly spread. I am not in a position on this occasion to give the actual figures or particulars of current operations, but I have every belief that Calcutta will see concrete results on a large scale in the course of a very few days and the rest of Bengal also within a very few days.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On this statement will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is in a position to give us an idea of the percentage which the total quantity bears to the consumption of this province or of the Calcutta city proper and suburbs? If it is not possible to give the actual amount, is it possible for him to give us one day's consumption, or 7 days, or 20 days or one month?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall consider the question. I am not in a position to give an offhand answer. It is a very important question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Government of Orissa have issued recently an order to all the District Magistrates of Orissa requiring them to retain one-third or 30 per cent. of the exportable offer to Bengal, and that the Orissa Government also proposed to fix a price of rice at which such exports will take place?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware but I shall make an enquiry.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government of Bengal have had any finality of arrangement under which export from Orissa can be effected?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The matter so far as I am aware rests with the Regional Commissioner appointed by the Centre.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that at the present moment the Orissa Government is under negotiation with the Food Purchasing Officer of the Government of Bengal through the Directorate of Civil Supply to settle the price at which the Government of Bengal will receive rice imported from Orissa and that as this matter has not been finally decided as yet, Orissa imports are not coming?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I welcome the information. My friend is not asking for information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am asking whether the Minister in charge is not aware of this.

Mr. SPEAKER: He is not aware.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, no. The position is that we have heard from the Hon'ble Minister's statement that elaborate arrangements for extensive imports and all that have been made.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a general statement.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am only pointing out to him that in spite of these assurances and newspaper advertisements and publicity and all that the officials of Government have not as yet come to any finality of arrangement and therefore rice which is ready for export is not coming to Bengal?

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be because he says he is new to his office.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that officials stand in the way?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I think the honourable member's forecast will prove untrue.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of any wagons having been allotted in Orissa for transmission of rice to Bengal during the last few days?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How many wagons?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That I am not prepared to disclose at this stage.

Supply of wagons for the transport of rice and paddy into the Pabna district.

***208. Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that Pabna is a deficit district with respect to the supply of rice and paddy;

(*ii*) that owing to abnormal flood in the Jamuna paddy crop of half of the district comprising the Jamuna area was submerged and totally destroyed during the year;

(*iii*) that rice and paddy used to be regularly supplied in the Jamuna area of the district by boat from Assam;

(*iv*) that the ban of Assam Government has put a stop to such supply;

(*v*) that during the months of December and January rice and paddy were seldom available in the area and even ration system (at the rate of 4 seers a family) had to be imposed in the Pabna town itself; and

(*vi*) that although merchants and other licensees are now trying to get rice and paddy for the area (from supply centres) they are being hampered from so doing for inadequate supply of wagons by the Railway authorities?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the action the Government contemplates to take in the matter, specially with regard to the supply of wagons?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*), (*i*), (*iii*) and (*iv*) Yes.

(*ii*) A large portion of the district was affected by floods and paddy in the area mostly damaged.

(*v*) For a certain period in the month of December there was difficulty in obtaining rice and paddy, and consequently a restriction allowing 4 seers per individual from one shop only was in force in the town of Pabna.

(*vi*) The merchants had difficulty in obtaining rice and paddy for shortage of wagons and other causes for some period only, these causes were not subsequently felt to any appreciable extent and the position has improved now.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the same condition which had prevailed in December was repeated only recently, in the beginning and middle of March?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am speaking from my official report and this is dated 25th February, but if my friend says that the same condition prevails now, then I suppose I have to accept his statement—this is his constituency.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: With reference to answer (*iv*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state if Government has done anything in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer may have to be modified but not tonight.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: With reference to answer (*a*) (*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state if Government contemplate starting test relief work or any other kind of relief in that area?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: "No" as Minister in charge of Civil Supplies but in my present other capacity "Yes".

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*v*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state what was the nature of this difficulty in obtaining rice and paddy and from what places and from what sources these were obtained and what were the measures taken by Government to ease the situation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am unable to answer a string of questions.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Then I will subdivide. What was the difficulty in obtaining rice and paddy?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I see from the report, transport difficulties and also difficulties in the matter of mobilisation of supplies locally.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state wherefrom Government had expected to obtain rice and paddy?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am unable to answer that question.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what were the measures taken by Government to ease the situation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In public interest I am unable to disclose the information.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*vi*) where it is stated that the position has improved now, is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the price of rice has risen from Rs. 12 to Rs. 20 for shortage of supplies in the district?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware but there has been a general rise of prices.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that a large number of boats from Pabna have been detained by the Assam Government and the District Magistrate of Pabna has referred the matter to the Government to release those boats?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware of that. This is a matter which does not relate to the Civil Supply Department, but I will make enquiry.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that rice purchased from Nawabganj in Malda in the Rajshahi Division by the licensed Pabna merchants is being taken to Kushtia and sold there and for that the people of Pabna are not getting their supplies?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware. My honourable friend will realise my difficulties in answering these questions of detail in supplementary questions.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please enquire into the matter whether rice purchased for Pabna is going to Kushtia?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know but I shall make enquiries.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of supplies and what steps do Government propose to take to mitigate the sufferings of the people there? Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether it is a fact that there is shortage?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical question.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please enquire if there is any shortage?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: There has been a shortage of supply. I have already said that and I shall certainly make enquiries and take every possible step to alleviate the situation.

Provincial Coal Control Scheme.

***209. Mr. BANKU BEHARI MANDAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) what is the Provincial Coal Control Scheme so far as it concerns the Province of Bengal; and

(*ii*) the principle of distribution of the provincial quota, specially with regard to the supply of domestic coal, in Calcutta and mufassal districts?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he consulted the Coal Trade Organisations when making allotments of the Provincial quota?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) who is the Provincial Coal Controller of Bengal; and

(*ii*) what are his special qualifications for tackling the problems of Coal Trade and the intricacies of the movements of coal in the Province?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing for the years 1941 and 1942—

(*i*) the number of wagons allotted to respective depot-holders in Calcutta; and

(*ii*) the average number of soft coke wagons imported by each of them?

(*f*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement of the quota holders of Calcutta stations showing—

(*i*) who have failed to enter into contract with collieries; and

(*ii*) who among them are still enjoying the quota and on what basis?

(*g*) Is it a fact that persons having no coal depots or coal business were sanctioned quota for soft coke wagons?

(*h*) If the answer to (*g*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*i*) Is it a fact that the Directorate of Civil Supplies, Bengal, has cancelled the quota of several depot-holders?

(*j*) If the answer to (*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of such cancellation; and

(*ii*) the reason of the cancellation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Under the Provincial Coal Control Scheme devised by the Government of India, each colliery has been allotted a quota of coal to be supplied to a particular province. The quota is expressed in terms of wagons. The sum total of the collieries' quota represents the provincial quota of coal which is controlled by the Diretor of Civil Supplies. He allots quotas to various coal dealers and small industries. These obtain contracts for the supply of coal from the various collieries and then approach the Controller of Coal Distribution for securing necessary wagons.

(*ii*) The provincial quota is distributed as between Calcutta and the various districts in accordance with the requirements of each area. Allotments of individual coal dealers are made, in the case of the districts, on the recommendation of the District Magistrates and in the case of Calcutta, on the recommendation of the Controller of Civil Supplies, Calcutta. They choose dependable dealers and fix the quota of each dealer on the basis of business handled by him in the past, as far as this is ascertainable.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Not considered necessary.

(*d*) The Director of Civil Supplies who is the Provincial Controller of Coal, *ex-officio*.

(*e*) (*i*) No. The allotment scheme was not in operation during 1941 and 1942.

(*ii*) Figures for the second half of 1942 are available and are laid on the Library Table.

(*f*) (*i*) The list showing the names is placed on the Library Table. Those marked (A) succeeded in obtaining contracts for some of the wagons allotted to them. Others (marked B) failed wholly.

(*ii*) Those marked (A) in the above list.

(*g*) Not so far as known to the Directorate.

(*h*) Does not arise.

(*i*) Yes.

(*j*) (*i*) Two in addition to those marked (B) in the list referred to in (*f*) above.

(*ii*) Failure to obtain contracts and violation of the orders of the Director of Civil Supplies in respect of prices fixed and the mode of distribution.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state when this scheme came into operation and with what result? If there was any scheme for Calcutta, how is it that Calcutta experienced famine of coal which was sold here between Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per maund?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall not be able to answer the question tonight.

Shortage of food crop in the district of Jalpaiguri.

***210. Babu KHAGENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that there has been acute shortage of food crop this year in the district of Jalpaiguri; and

(*ii*) that the yield of rice crop in the district has been less than average and that about 60,000 acres of paddy field did not yield any crop at all due to draught or untimely rain?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the total acreage of lands that were under rice cultivation and their approximate yield in the district in the years 1941 and 1942?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the steps he has taken to supplement the shortage of food crops in the district?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that even normally the district is not self-sufficient in regard to rice crop; and

(*ii*) that every year it has to import rice from Burma, Assam, Cooch Behar and adjoining districts?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) Yes, as in many other districts.

(*ii*) Yes, the acreage under the winter paddy crop fell substantially.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) The policy of Government has been to ensure the most equitable distribution of the rice reserves of the Province.

(*d*) (*i*) In the present state of statistics, it is difficult to be dogmatic on this point.

(*ii*) In previous years, rice used to be imported into and also exported outside this district.

Mr. ABDULLAH-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that *hats* are being looted?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: May I, Sir, invite the attention of the honourable member to the Assembly Procedure Rules? The question relates to the Minister in charge of the Home Department, and as I am not the Minister in charge of that department I am afraid I cannot answer the question.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, it is not the question as to which department is concerned. The Hon'ble Minister admits that he is in touch with the economic situation and that if the economic situation deteriorates

he is the person who is responsible for it. *Hat*-looting, Sir, is merely a symptom of economic depression and falls within the portfolio of the Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, you know full well that different departments of Government are inter-related and that it is not possible always for a particular Minister to answer all supplementary questions. I have allowed quite a lot of supplementary questions but you know my difficulties about the way in which they are answered.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: In these matters is it permissible on the part of an Hon'ble Minister to avoid answering questions saying that the question does not relate to his department?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sen, the position is this. The House expects when a question is put that the Minister in charge of the department will furnish all necessary information to the House but what happens in regard to supplementary questions is somewhat different. The Hon'ble Minister in such a case may at once say that he is not prepared for giving an answer and he may ask for notice. Similarly he may also say that it is a matter relating to another department, say, the Home Department and that it does not directly arise out of the main question. There is therefore nothing wrong on the part of the Minister to say so.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to question (*c*), *viz.*, what steps the Hon'ble Minister has taken to supplement the shortage of food crops in the district, he has replied that the policy of Government has been to ensure the most equitable distribution of the rice reserves of the province, my question is "what steps have been taken by Government" and not "what policy has been adopted" and I want an answer to that point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sen, the expression "steps" is an all-embracing one and no Minister can do full justice to it by way of answering a supplementary question.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the meaning of the term "rice reserves" since it has been stated by Government that there is shortage?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am trying to discover the meaning of the expression myself. This draft is not mine.

Babu MADHU SUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken by Government to work out a suitable policy for equitable distribution of foodstuffs in the province?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already answered that question.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that he does not himself know the meaning of the expression "rice reserves", will he be pleased to state if there is any rice stocked by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: As I have already stated, Sir, I do not myself understand the meaning of the expression. I am new to the office and have just taken charge. I will take some time to acquaint myself with the working of the department.

Mr. P. BANERJEE: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister am I to understand that he does not take any responsibility for this answer?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend knows quite well that the responsibility of the Ministry is joint and several.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state by what time does he expect to familiarise himself with the working of the department and with the technical words that the department use?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: After my honourable friend, Mr. Suhrawardy, assumes charge of this office.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am fully aware, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister is not responsible for what has been done in this department, but I want to know by what time he expects to get himself familiarised with the technical expressions of the department?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: What I propose to do is this: As I have indicated to you yesterday I have been revising the answers already given and trying to bring them up to date. The questions to which answers have been given are very old and they must necessarily relate to the period when the questions were given notice of. As soon as I finish revising the questions—probably by Monday next—I shall be able to give proper replies.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, that is not my point. I do not want to know by what time the Hon'ble Minister will be able to revise the answers but I want to know by what time he will be able to familiarise himself with the technical words of the department.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: As I have already stated, not until my friend, Mr. Suhrawardy, assumes charge of office.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Grant of family allowance to certain security prisoners.

63. Babu JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether security prisoners Dr. Mihir Kumar Motaid and Babus Pulin Behari Pal and Prafulla Ranjan Ghosh have applied to the Government for a grant of family allowances;

(*ii*) whether Dr. Mihir Kumar Motaid was a medical practitioner in the town of Mymensingh and was maintaining his wife, children and other family members entirely from his earnings;

(*iii*) whether Babu Pulin Behari Pal's family members were dependent for maintenance on the contributions from his earnings; and

(*iv*) whether Prafulla Ranjan Ghosh's family members consisting of 7 persons including his aged and invalid parents were solely dependent on his earnings?

(*b*) If the answers to (*a*) (*ii*) to (*iv*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken on their applications?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting them family allowances?

(*d*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) My information is that Babu Mihir Kumar Motaid belongs to a joint family whose main source of income is from landed property and that he has other earning brothers who render financial assistance to the joint family.

(*iii*) My information is that Babu Pulin Bihari Pal has got other two earning brothers who contribute for the maintenance of the family who also have some landed property in addition.

(*iv*) My information is that Babu Prafulla Ranjan Ghosh was not an earning member of the family at all.

(*b*) to (*d*) Rs. 10 per month has been granted as allowance to the wife of Babu Mihir Kumar Motaid and Rs.15 per month to the mother of Babu Pulin Bihari Pal, but no family allowance has been granted, to Babu Prafulla Ranjan Ghosh for the reason stated in reply to (*a*) (*iv*) above.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the answer (*a*)(*ii*), *viz.*, "that Babu Mihir Kumar Motaid belongs to a joint family", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of the present-day nature of the system of joint family in Bengal?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: My point, Sir, is that answers to these questions are being avoided by reference to other matters and that is why I have been compelled to ask this question.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is another thing, Mr. Roy, but how could you ask about the nature of the joint family system in Bengal? I do not allow that question.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Dr. Mihir Kumar Motaid used to live in Mymensingh only with his family and was himself maintaining his family?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will make an enquiry with regard to the cases of Babu Pulin Behari Pal and Dr. Mihir Kumar Motaid that they were living separately from the joint family and maintaining their own families?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know. I shall enquire.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of reviewing the cases of such prisoners who were the earning members of joint families but due to whose detention there has been a loss of income of those families, and, if so, whether the Hon'ble Minister will reconsider the question of giving them an allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: When applications are made I will examine the particular cases.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer (*a*)(*ii*) it is stated that the main source of income is from landed property. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the income from landed property?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the present-day condition of the landed properties?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, I am not aware.

Distribution of seeds to agriculturists.

64. Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware that there has been a dearth of seeds of food-grains in the province due to the damage of crops?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government are considering the desirability of distributing seeds throughout the country?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the quantity the Government desire to distribute in—

(*i*) the whole of the Province;

(*ii*) the district of Mymensingh; and

(*iii*) the subdivision of Tangail?

(*d*) Does the Hon'ble Minister contemplate to increase the quantity of the improved type of paddy seeds for distribution among the agriculturists?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE and CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*), (*b*) and (*d*) Yes.

(c) (i) 48,000 maunds of *aus* paddy seed and 2·25 lakh maunds of *aman* seeds. It is also proposed to distribute 24,000 maunds of gram, 12,000 maunds of lentil and 6,000 maunds of mustard seed.

(ii) and (iii) The district of Mymensingh and the Tangail subdivision will get their due share.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: With reference to answer (c)(i), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any quantity of *aus* paddy seeds has already been collected for distribution, and, if so, what amount?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Distribution has commenced. I cannot say exactly what is the quantity which has been distributed up to now.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: My information is that in certain districts no distribution has commenced. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the district of Faridpur, where there is a great scarcity of *aus* seeds, any distribution is being done or is contemplated to be done?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I met Mr. Ahmed Ali Mridha yesterday and from him I came to know that distribution in Faridpur has not yet commenced, and I have issued orders yesterday that distribution may take place immediately.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House what will be the price of the *aus* seeds per maund?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Originally the price was Rs. 12 but as the price has now gone up I have passed orders to sell them at Rs. 16 per maund.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the fact that owing to high prices of other necessaries of life the cultivators have no purchasing power this year, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give them gratuitous relief in seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: These seeds will be distributed to them by way of agricultural loan without charging any interest. Either they will return exactly the same quantity they borrowed or the actual cost price which Government incurred.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who has quoted the price of Rs. 16 which the Government have accepted for a maund of *aus* paddy seed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: We did not call for any tender or any quotation from any person. At the time when this scheme was placed before the Finance Department it was thought that as the price of rice was rising, seeds may be purchased at Rs. 16.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state from whom is the rice being purchased—whether the rice is being purchased through open tender or through any contractor? If so, who is the contractor? Will he kindly let us have the whole scheme?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Not through any contractor. It was purchased through departmental officers in *hats*, bazars and market places.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the criterion by which the quota of different districts and subdivisions is determined?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Population and according to the need of the district. I can give the full quota of 48,000 maunds which has been sanctioned already.

	Maunds.
Pabna	2,000
Jalpaiguri	2,000
Rangpur	4,000
Malda	4,000
Other two districts of North Bengal	2,000 each
Presidency and Burdwan Divisions (8 districts)	2,000 each
Dacca and Mymensingh	8,000
Faridpur	2,000
Tippera	2,000
Noakhali	2,000

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Is the Government aware that the quantity allotted for Kishoreganj subdivision is very inadequate and does not exceed one-tenth of actual requirements?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have set up any machinery to enable the agriculturists to get these agricultural seeds, and, if so, what is that machinery?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The machinery is the officers of the Agriculture Department. Officers of the Jute Department are also co-operating for the purpose of distribution.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: In view of the urgency and shortness of time what steps Government propose to take to make good the deficit of the requirements of any area?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course in the "Grow More Food" campaign the money which we have got has been set apart for this puropse. I have received reports from two or three districts where they say that the quantity is inadequate and I have informed the District Officer to correspond with the revenue authority so that agricultural loan may be given to those people where it is necessary and needed.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to which officers are the agriculturists of any particular union to apply for getting seeds speedily?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: They will have to apply to the District Magistrates and on requisition from the District Magistrates our departmental officers will supply seeds.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in Daulatpur and the neighbouring villages in the district of Khulna Government officers are not receiving any money from the agriculturists in lieu of seeds supplied to them without payment of 25 per cent. interest?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am not aware.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the quota for Mymensingh and other districts of the province with respect to the *aman* paddy?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As for the *aman* paddy, I have not yet fixed the quota for each district. Two lakhs 25 thousand maunds is the quota for the province.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether distribution has already commenced in the different subdivisions of the district of Mymensingh of *aus* and *aman* paddy seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Distribution of *aman* seeds has not yet begun. As regards *aus* seeds I cannot exactly say in which part of the Mymensingh district it has commenced.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Does the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of making enquiry into the matter and if he is satisfied that Government officers are not accepting the money refunded by the agriculturists without interest, will he be pleased to send a circular to that effect?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Last year the distribution was made on *howai* system, *i.e.*, a man taking one maund will have to return one and half maunds or its equivalent money value. That was the system introduced last year. This year I have stopped that and no interest will be charged this year.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of putting the whole thing in abeyance, I mean the realisation of interest, for the present and issue a circular to that effect?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: If I receive distinct and specific complaints that people cannot pay and it is hardship upon them to realise *howai* either in cash or in kind, then those cases will be considered by Government.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what portion of the need will be mitigated by the amount of the seed distributed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know what is the need and what portion will be mitigated.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Agricultural loan is being given to the agriculturists. Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that seeds are not available in the market and agricultural loan will not be of any use to them?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I know that seeds are not available in every market in every district. The District Agricultural Officer as well as the District Magistrate will help in the matter of procuring seeds from neighbouring places.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the difficulty of the agriculturists of a particular union in applying to the District Magistrate as it entails costs to him to get the seeds and the delay in getting them, and, if so, will he consider the desirability of allowing the agriculturists of a particular union to apply to the Subdivisional Officer and to get relief from him?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, they may apply to the Subdivisional Officer. District Magistrate means Subdivisional Officer.

Operation of the section 40A of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act.

65. Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Rural Indebtedness Department aware—

(*i*) that section 40A of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act does not authorise parties to appear before the District Judge personally or by pleaders; and

(*ii*) that this causes inconvenience to the parties?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, does the Hon'ble Minister contemplate to take steps for amending the section?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) I am not aware of any such inconvenience.

(*b*) No.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the fact that under section 40A of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act the parties do not get any opportunity to appear before the District Judge on appeal personally or through their pleaders and great inconvenience is caused to the parties, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether he will make a thorough enquiry into this?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: In the original Act there was no provision of revision; the appellate court was the final authority. Now in the amended Act a provision has been made that people may expect further relief by way of revision to the District Judge. The intention of the Legislature was to give relief without any cost on the part of either party. If permission is given to appear through their agents

or pleaders, it will come up entirely in the same way as coming up to the court. That is the reason why Government did not like these things. If my honourable friend can convince me that as a matter of fact without this sufficient injustice or hardship is caused to the party then in that case I shall consider it.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he means when he says "I am not aware"? Does he mean that he is not aware as a Minister, or he is not personally aware or whether he is deaf?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As a Minister I am not aware, but as a lawyer I am aware and as a public man I cannot support it.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), is the Hon'ble Minister aware that if lawyers are not allowed to appear before the District Judge the poor debtors will not be able to engage lawyers and it will not be possible for them to represent their cases and the cases will go by default?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I have already submitted there is a revisional power.

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not answer these questions.

Promotion of Mr. N. G. Mukherjee to the Provincial Veterinary Service.

34. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Sj. N. G. Mukherjee of the Bengal Veterinary College has been promoted to the Provincial Service as a lecturer to the Veterinary College?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date of his promotion;

(*ii*) the period of his service; and

(*iii*) the number of officers whom he has superseded?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) The officer was first appointed to officiate in the Bengal Lower Veterinary Service on the 17th February, 1942, but reverted to his appointment in the Subordinate Veterinary Service on the 1st April, 1942. He was again promoted to officiate in the Provincial Service on the 10th December, 1942, and is continuing in that appointment.

(*ii*) About eight years and five months.

(*iii*) Seven.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason why seven people have been superseded?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Because they were found unsuitable for promotion by the department.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the reason for which he was reverted in 1942 and afterwards again promoted?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Because he was promoted in a leave vacancy and as soon as the permanent incumbent returned he was reverted.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this gentleman was in the Calcutta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and dismissed from there?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am not aware.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the period of service of these seven officers who were superseded?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, I can give that information from the record. Babu B. N. Das Gupta was appointed in 1910, officiated as Assistant Director in 1936 and found unsuitable; Babu S. N. Sen was appointed in July, 1934, as an Inspector and was also found unsuitable; Maulvi Mobarak Ali was appointed on 17th September, 1934, as an Inspector and was found unsuitable; Babu B. N. Nandi was appointed as an Inspector in July, 1936, and was also considered undesirable and he has no capacity to hold any administrative charge; Babu A. K. Roy was appointed on 3rd December, 1927, and was not considered suitable to hold administrative charge; Mr. Jamsheduddin was appointed on 14th May, 1935, and was found unsuitable for promotion; and Babu Hrishikesh Sen was appointed on 12th August, 1932, and was also found not suitable for holding any administrative charge. Then comes Babu N. G. Mukherji who was appointed on 21st December, 1939; he officiated as a lecturer.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: In view of the Hon'ble Minister's statement that some people were found unsuitable and some were undesirable, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who determines the suitability or desirability of the candidates just mentioned by him?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: The Principal, Veterinary College, and the Director, Veterinary College.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the basis upon which the Principal or the other person just mentioned proceeds to declare a candidate as unsuitable or undesirable?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice. It is not possible for me to answer that off-hand.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: In view of his answer and my information, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry whether this gentleman was a dismissed hand from the Calcutta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I shall hold an enquiry.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on whose recommendation Mr. N. G. Mukherji had been promoted?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: As I have already said, Sir, it was the Principal of the Veterinary College.

Rangbang Estate, Darjeeling, and Ejectment Notice.

36. Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) when the notice of ejectment was served on the proprietors of the Rangbang Estate, Darjeeling;

(*ii*) what was the time given; and

(*iii*) whether the ejectment case has been started on the expiry of the time given?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*c*) Are the Government considering the desirability of filing the ejectment suit?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) Original notices were served on 16th July, 1941, 11th August, 1941, 23rd August, 1941, and 13th September, 1941, and additional notices were served on 18th February, 1942, 24th February, 1942, 28th February, 1942, 5th March, 1942, 7th March, 1942, 14th March, 1942, and 17th March, 1942.

(*ii*) 31st March, 1942.

(*iii*) No.

(*b*) and (*c*) The legal position is under examination afresh.

Point of information.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: On a point of information, Sir. You were pleased to hold over one question about Mr. Farhad Reza Chaudhury——

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I want to know from the Chief Minister when that question will be answered. As there was a statement in which reference was made in the Council——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is held over.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I want to know when that question will be answered by the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will make an enquiry. The papers are in the office. I shall try to expedite. I cannot say at the present moment.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

29—Police.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 2,71,63,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "29—Police".

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the Calcutta Police "Poor Box" Fund.

Sir, my intention in moving this motion is to draw the pointed attention of Government about the existence of a public feeling of resentment against the manner in which the fund is administered. Sir, I do not want to enter into the question of ethics or as to the morality or otherwise of the maintenance of a "Poor Box" Fund in a Government Department where collections must of necessity be realised under a sort of compulsion. Under the existing arrangement, motorists who infringe traffic rules are made to pay a sort of donation in order to escape the harassment of Police Court proceedings. Most of the motorists are glad to escape that harassment and for this they have to pay a contribution to the "Poor Box" Fund which is generally fixed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

Sir, I do not question so much the existence of this fund, but I strongly object to the manner in which this fund is administered. I refer to the distribution of charities specially.

Sir, when the public is called upon to make this contribution rather openly, I think it is only fair that the public should have a right to know how this fund is administered and in what manner the disbursements are made. So far as the question of receipts and expenditure is concerned, everything is shrouded in a veil of mystery. I, therefore, draw the attention of Government to the fact that there is a certain amount of feeling in the minds of the public that everything is not above board. I personally cannot say anything about it because I am not aware how this fund is administered. I put a question about this subject, but unfortunately I have not received any answer. I have been putting questions for the last three years, but I have not been successful in eliciting any information from Government. I had a talk with the previous Home Minister who told me that he was seriously thinking of constituting a Committee to manage this fund, but before he could arrive at any decision, he had to leave office and the new Home Minister is now functioning. I also draw the attention of the present Home Minister to the fact that the Commissioner of Police who is running this fund should be assisted by a small Sub-Committee of a representative character so that the public may know how the money is disbursed. The Advisory Committee may also have a voice in distributing charities to all classes of public organisations. I hope this suggestion will meet with the approval of Government. I do not ask for anything much

and it is not very difficult for Government to accede to this humble request that the Commissioner of Police should be assisted by a small Sub-Committee of a representative character.

Sir, I hope my motion will be accepted by Government.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the failure of Government to check abnormal increase in crimes and police excesses.

Sir, from the Administration Report of 1941, which is the latest report available to us, we notice that so far as the Province of Bengal is concerned, from the year 1937 crimes are showing large increases. To cite instances, we find that so far as cognisable cases are concerned, there has been an increase of 5,732 cases over those in 1940. Rioting cases have increased from 934 in 1937 to 1,643 in 1941. So, if the Hon'ble Minister will please refer to the Administration Report of 1940-41, he will find that there has been an increase in all kinds of cases.

Now, so far as Calcutta is concerned, it is not possible to give any information in the absence of the Administration Report of 1941-42 which has not yet been published. This is how the department is being run.

Sir, the cases that are mentioned in the Administration Report are reported cases. Now, we know that in Calcutta as well as in the mufassal there are many new cases every year, but the first information report of such cases is not taken by the thana officer or the subordinate officers unless the complainant is prepared to pay a certain sum of money. This is a situation which we very much deplore and we have year after year brought this fact to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister but without any result. Things have gone from bad to worse and there has been no improvement in the matter of detection of crimes. In Daulatpur there have been cases of dacoities and thefts but the culprits could not be detected. Recently there were two dacoities there and it transpired that the thana officer was implicated in both of them. That officer was not allowed to make enquiries but an officer from another place was brought in for the purpose. The funniest part of the whole thing was that although he was not entrusted with the task of enquiry, he was not removed from the place till the enquiry was finished. The result was that he stood in the way of proper enquiry and the accused were released for want of evidence. So far I have spoken about the abnormal increase in crimes.

Now, Sir, I will deal with police excesses in the countryside. I hope other honourable members will deal with this subject so far as it concerns Calcutta, Noakhali and other places of East Bengal, but I will confine myself to West Bengal, particularly to the districts of 24-Parganas and Midnapore.

I will give one instance which occurred in my constituency at Diamond Harbour. One Abinash Chandra Das was arrested on the 27th February,

while on his way back to his village at Durgapur, under the impression that he was a Congress worker. In this connection I may say, for the information of the House, that any one who dresses himself in khaddar in Diamond Harbour or in the district of Midnapore is taken to be a Congress worker and is arrested and harassed. Now, although he was really not a Congress worker, he was arrested as such. He was only an employee of a firm known as Khadi Mandir. He had Rs. 25 with him and was going home to see his ailing mother after four months. He was detained at Teropepia and on the 1st of March he was sent to the Nandigram police-station and from there he was sent to Tamluk. Since that time he has never been heard of and his friends and relations do not know whether he is still alive, or is rotting in jail or he is dead and gone.

The second case that I would like to refer to, is that of Digendra Nath Das, a fourth year student of the Ripon College. He is 18 years old and was preparing for the B.A. Examination to be held in May. He was arrested on the 9th.

On the 10th evening one Special Branch officer came to search the house and brought Dijendra with him. His father offered the son food of which he was, however, not allowed to partake. On the 11th the father went to the Special Branch office but after he had waited for many hours he was told to go to the Bankshall Court. He was not, however, produced in the Court that day. Then he went to the Sukea Street thana where he was told that he would be produced at Bankshall Court on the 12th on which date the case was adjourned till the 15th. He saw the Deputy Commissioner as he was going out, but he was asked to see him on the 14th, and then again on the 15th. He went to the Special Branch office the same afternoon. He was allowed to give him food but he was not allowed to give him any clothing. When he went again he was told that he had been taken to the Amherst Street police-station and was lodged with badmashes and drunkards. He is now rotting in jail.

Now, Sir, I will pass on to Midnapore. On the 9th August, the Congress leaders were arrested and gagged as a result of which hartals were organised and peaceful demonstrations were held in Tamluk. There was a procession headed by one Matangini Hazra, an old lady aged 70 years. She was carrying the Congress flag in her hand; she was shot at thrice, first on the leg, second at the knee-joint and third on the head under orders of the Second Officer of Tamluk police-station. The effect was that the old lady lay dead on the ground.

Sir, the total casualties by shooting were 41 in different thanas; wounded 133, rape and assaults on women were 137, houses looted by the police numbered 1,352, and houses looted by hooligans numbered 188 and houses burnt 1,080. Wholesale arrests of male folks, destruction of properties worth lakhs and imposition of collective fines were the subsequent results.

Then, Sir, Sri Krishna Maity of Tajpur, Contai, an old man of 76 years, a rich respectable zamindar, was mercilessly belaboured in the presence of

the District Magistrate, and was compelled to work on the roads by carrying earth on his head. His pucca building was set on fire with petrol and valuables worth Rs. 20,000 were looted. But all this was done although he was not a Congress man.

Nalini Raha, a police officer of Geonkhali thana, ordered wholesale raping of women, both young and old—, mothers, wives and sisters. Shooting was nothing, he said, and raping would bring forth a generation who would not join the Congress movement. This mass raping was committed after driving out all male folks by beating them mercilessly.

Sir, cases of rape, arson, looting, destruction of properties were published in a booklet entitled "Some facts about the Midnapore tragedy". That book has been proscribed. The deposit money of the new Suhrid Press was forfeited. But why was it that the author of the book, Mr. M. N. Mitter, was not arrested by Government? The reason for that is that Government are afraid of facing these things in an open court.

Now, Sir, I will ask what about the enquiry promised by the Hon'ble Minister? Yesterday the Hon'ble the Chief Minister said that a Special Officer would be appointed who would accept complaints. This is not possible. The police will then punish them and their miseries will know no limit. Already policemen are destroying all evidence in their possession. But if there had been an Enquiry Committee going about in the villages and different centres taking evidence, then at least some cases of oppression would have seen the light of the day.

Even after the typhoon when people were absolutely helpless, police officers carried on and are still carrying on ceaseless oppressions unknown in the history of any land. We have heard of untold miseries of the people under Czardom in Russia. We have also heard of the worst atrocities committed on the Jews by Hitler. But atrocities committed by an organised band of raiders under orders of the officers of the Government, that call themselves a civilised Government, pale into insignificance against those committed by the Czarist Government in Russia or those committed by Hitler's Germany on the Jews. Even 25 per cent. of the relief money is pocketed by the police as their toll and one Mr. Trilakhya Prodhan, B.L., of Alipore, was arrested for protesting against these acts of the Police.

But this is not all, Sir. Moslem offenders were released from jails and their relations outside were forced by the police to help them in looting the properties of their Hindu brethren and they were also asked to hoist the Muslim League flag on their houses so that they would be exempted from any kind of oppression.

Sir, this is just a small picture of the two unfortunate subdivisions of Midnapore under the civilised British administration.

Mr. David Hendry, leader of the European group, asked a starred question No. 108A in order to ascertain what was the extent of the damage done by the rebel elements—the number of murders after the 16th October was 2, thana buildings burnt 3, private buildings burnt 8. Compared to that the excesses committed by the police and the military are so numerous

that they beggar all description. Therefore, Sir, in the fitness of things I suggest that Government should take steps to put a stop to what oppressions are being committed by Government agents before and after the cyclone.

Maulvi KAZI ABUL MASUD: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, in moving this motion I beg to submit most respectfully that so far guard organisation particularly with reference to the grievances of the civic guards of Rajshahi Sadar and Nator against Mr. Mihirgobind Bhaya, District Commandant of Rajshahi Civic Guards.

Sir, in moving this motion I beg to submit most respectfully that so far as the civic guard organisation is concerned, Muslims are quite willing to volunteer their services to defend their hearth and home against the aggression of the Japanese. But I do not know whether any confidential circular was issued to the magistrates because local officers in charge of recruiting civic guards have been avoiding the enlistment of Moslems as civic guards in the mofassal. As, for instance, no less a person than Mr. Khorshed Alam Khan Chaudhuri, who happens to be a cousin of the late Mr. Ashraf Ali, who was Deputy Speaker of this Assembly, was not allowed to enlist himself as a civic guard of Nator. So far as group commanders are concerned, they were selected without holding any examination and the whole thing was arbitrarily decided. There was much agitation over this, representations were made before the District Officer and District Superintendent of Police. Sir, there were persons who were in every way superior to those taken as group commanders and the proportion of Moslems in that rank is quite inadequate. Among the Muslims there were graduates and persons having Buchanan training. Among the group commanders of Nator three are Hindus and only one is a Muslim.

Now, Sir, all these matters were brought to the notice of the local officers, but these grievances have not been attended to. This shows that the local officers do not like to give any privileges or rights to the Muslims who are quite willing to serve as Civic Guards. So far as the Civic Guards of Rajshahi Sadar are concerned, there was a deputation consisting of the Chairman of the Rajshahi District Board, Chairman of the Rajshahi Municipality, Secretary, Mahomedan Association, Rajshahi, and Secretary, Bar Library. This deputation waited on the District Officer Mr. Aminuzzaman Khan and placed certain grievances against the District Commandant Mr. Mihirgobind Bhaya. There were certain specific charges of bribery and corruption against the District Commander. It has been alleged that this District Group Commander, taking advantage of his position, took bribe from some merchants and shop-keepers in dealing with food and other essential commodities. Whenever these charges of corruption were brought against this Group Commander, the District Magistrate of Rajshahi took no steps whatsoever. Some Muslim Group Commanders also placed their own personal grievances before the District Magistrate, Rajshahi. If the District Magistrate did not accede to their demand or did not deem it proper to hold any enquiry into the matter, there was no other alternative

left open but to resign the post of Civic Guard. As a result of this three Muslim lecturers of Rajshahi College and some other respectable gentlemen tendered their resignation as Civic Guards from Rajshahi. If this state of things continues and no enquiry is held, I think the utilities of the Civic Guards organisation will lose its importance, and the organisation will be very unpopular in the mofussil. So I respectfully submit and through you I request the Minister in charge to hold an enquiry into the matter and to see that the grievances of the Muslim Civic Guards of Natore and Rajshahi Sadar are attended to.

With these words I commend my motion.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the failure of the Police Administration in Bengal in giving protection to the law-abiding citizens from military oppression sometimes amounting to most heinous crimes within the purview of the Indian Penal Code.

In support of my motion I shall refer to the tragic incidents which happened on the 16th April last year in a village called Sonoa within the Feni subdivision close to the Fajilpur railway station and just bordering on the evacuated area. The evacuated areas have been occupied by the British and Indian soldiers and their officers. They have got their camps in the houses left by the villagers in the evacuated areas. From the second week of April last year thousands of people of that locality used to work as day-labourers in connection with the military preparations in the evacuated areas. These people had to go out early in the morning and had to return in the evening. During the day-time the womenfolk and children ordinarily used to stay at home. Taking advantage of this fact some of the soldiers placed on duty near the place of occurrence entered the houses of Habibulla and Mirza Ali, caught hold of some females and began to ravish them by force. The inmates of these houses raised an alarm whereupon some of the villagers who had been working in the evacuated area close to the place of occurrence hurried on to the spot. One of the villagers inflicted cut wounds with a sharp-edged instrument to rescue a woman from the clutches of a soldier. These soldiers, seeing that a large number of people had been coming to the place of occurrence, opened fire. As a result thereof one Sadek Ali met instantaneous death and another Mokbul Ahmed received fatal wounds expiring a few hours afterwards. Two others who received gun-shot wounds as a result of the firing had to be removed to Feni hospital. Another person was slightly injured. Now, Sir, the villagers succeeded in snatching away a rifle from the soldiers to prevent them from firing. This incident took place between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning. In the afternoon between 3 and 4 o'clock the whole force of Indian soldiers accompanied by their European officers proceeded in motor trucks to the place of occurrence. They encircled 24 homesteads wherein as many as 81 families according to the Union Board register permanently reside besides several other families of evacuees. First of all they took into custody all the adult male members of these houses and dragged them

to a place near Habibulla's house and caused them to sit down with their eyes fixed on the ground surrounded by a cordon of soldiers in the presence of European officers. The women and children placed in the helpless condition began to run away from their houses in different directions for shelter. Those unfortunate females who could not escape the clutches of the soldiers were ravished. Others were violated, insulted and criminally assaulted. Then they broke open the chests, trunks and boxes and took away cash and ornaments, destroyed or damaged all movables in those houses. Of the adult people taken into custody 13 comparatively younger in age and stronger in physique were escorted one by one to a secluded place and beaten. In the meantime the rifle that was snatched away in the morning was recovered from a tank. About candle light the Additional Subdivisional Magistrate, a Mahomedan gentleman, and a Police Sub-Inspector appeared on the spot and arrested the 13 young people and allowed the rest to go. On return these people found their houses completely deserted. It took them two or three days to find out the females and children who took shelter in different places. The female members belonging to the same family were sometimes found in far off different villages. Sir, the local people who had been working as day-labourers in connection with the military operations ceased to work as a protest. Over the signature of the Additional Subdivisional Magistrate one printed leaflet was issued admitting the murders, and this gentleman asked the people to resume work and gave the assurance that on investigation the culprits would be punished and, if necessary, death sentence would be inflicted. Before the Police some of the ladies who had been ravished made statements disclosing the acts of shame perpetrated on them. These women were sent to Feni hospital and were examined by the medical officer there who found marks of injury on their cheeks, lips and other parts of their bodies.

Then, Sir, the President of the District Congress Committee and the President of the Subdivisional Congress Committee as also the Secretary of the Tippera District Congress Committee held a joint enquiry and submitted report to the President of the Indian National Congress. Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, a member of the Congress Working Committee, and Miss Khorsed Ben Naoroji, a grand-daughter of the late Dadabhoy Naoroji, a very distinguished and highly educated and cultured lady, were deputed by Mahatma Gandhi to ascertain facts. They went to the locality and were satisfied as to the truth of the allegations made by the females and the villagers. On this the All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution regarding molestation of women by soldiers, but this resolution was banned under the orders of the Government of India. In reply to a question in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for India repudiated these allegations as exaggerations and gross mis-representations, whereupon the President of the Indian National Congress took up the challenge maintaining that every syllable of this report was true. Then, Sir, a confidential enquiry was held by a Special Magistrate, a senior Deputy Magistrate having first class powers, in presence of the General Officer Commanding, but we do not know the result of the enquiry. But it is evident that the police did not submit any charge sheet. The police got

information about the morning incident immediately after the occurrence. They ought to have gone immediately to the place of occurrence and commenced investigation and thereby they could have prevented the afternoon occurrence. But they did not adopt that course. They had been intriguing all the while with the military authorities and allowed them to take the law into their own hands. After these soldiers had committed these acts of inhuman brutalities upon an unarmed population, the Additional Subdivisional Magistrate and police Sub-Inspector suddenly appeared and arrested certain persons.

Sir, in this particular case, the question of identification is not at all difficult. The soldier, who was inflicted injuries could be easily identified and the soldier from whose hands the rifle was snatched away could be easily traced. Further, Sir, the military people did not deny the occurrence but they gave a different version and said that it was in connection with cutting of some trees and that the villagers were the aggressors.

Sir, the very sight of a soldier is a terror to these villagers. According to the military version these villagers dared to attack some soldiers armed with rifles, knowing full well that a large number of soldiers had got their camps near by close to the place of occurrence and that these villagers persuaded their females to make false statements involving their personal honour. Not only that; they also fabricated marks of injury on their persons. This is a story which no one can believe. Sir, the recent hapennings in Midnapore are still fresh in our minds. I need not repeat them again. Instances of oppression on individuals committed by the military people are numerous. I shall cite only one instance. One Manindra Chandra Das of Budhan, police-station Burichang, Tippera, was shot dead by a European soldier at Mainamati in Tippera. The enquiring Magistrate discharged the accused, and the District and Sessions Judge directed the accused to be committed to the Court of Session for trial, but, Sir, some months have elapsed and the accused has not yet been committed to the Court of Session for trial. This shows the deliberate indifference of the police in such a serious case. This goes to establish beyond doubt that the police have failed to enforce law and order in cases where the military are concerned. May I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Law and Order what steps he has taken in these cases and what relief he has given or proposes to give to the victims?

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(*After adjournment.*)

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the duties of the police in the mufassal under the Defence of India Rules.

Sir, we are living in abnormal circumstances due to the devastating war —circumstances over which we have no control, circumstances for which

the Defence of India Act and the Defence of India Rules were promulgated. We have nothing to say against the promulgation of this abnormal law under abnormal circumstances, but, Sir, what we complain of is that this very sharp weapon and this rather dangerous weapon is being handled and used by the executives in the mufassal and also by the police in the mufassal in a somewhat reckless manner. Sir, the police, particularly in the mufassal, are creating panic in the minds of the innocent villagers and practically they are terrorising them in more ways than one. Permit me, Sir, to bring to the notice of this House some glaring instances in my constituency of police excesses in the name of the Defence of India Rules.

Sir, one day, I remember, a very innocent villager in the mufassal was talking with another villager telling him that the prices of paddy and rice were fixed in that locality for the time being, but how is it that the officers were not at all anxious, were not at all able to control the price of cloth that was rising higher and higher? A police officer was standing by. It reached his ears and at once that villager was arrested and put into custody and detained in the thana.

Secondly, Sir, some time ago a circular was issued in my constituency with regard to the *hâts* and bazars in the mufassal. The House will be surprised to know that it was ordered—and there was no reason for such an order—that all the *hâts* and bazars will be terminated punctually at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Sir, the police officers in the mufassal with watch in their hands went round the *hâts* and bazars telling the people, "It is now 5 o'clock. Go home." If anybody after that time was found to overstay by two, three or five minutes, he was arrested and sent up. In this way lots of people were hauled up before the courts in the subdivision and they had to take their trial under the Defence of India Rules for days together and afterwards most of them were fined.

Sir, the third one I should like to tell you and the House is that so far as the subdivisional town of Bongaon is concerned, very recently a circular or some sort of order by the executive has been issued fixing the price of fish in the market. Sir, this order has been so overzealously carried out by the local police that from the very next day no fish could be found in the market although fish is available to the officers concerned—officers of the police I mean—in what way you can understand very easily.

Sir, in this way we see that the police is doing many petty things in the name of the Defence of India Rules in the mufassal and they are practically terrorising the people—standing in the way of normal trade, business and supply.

Sir, I should like to suggest one thing, that the Hon'ble Home Minister will be pleased to issue a general order to all police officers, particularly in the mufassal, telling them not to stand in the way of carrying on the normal avocations of life by the peaceful villagers, and not to terrorise the people in any way in carrying on their normal duties and telling them to treat the villagers—innocent villagers—like their friends which is the ultimate aim and object of the Defence of India Rules. For this I should like to draw the attention of the House to only one line of section 2 of the

Defence of India Act—that this Act was passed "for maintaining the supplies and services essential to the life of the community."

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Islam, your time is up.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Sir, please allow me one minute more.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have been allowing one minute, two minutes, three minutes, five minutes, seven minutes or even ten minutes to members. The result has been that last night we had to sit till about 10-30 p.m. Henceforth I will not allow even one single minute more for discussion on this matter because I understand that none of the leaders are going to speak on this subject. Therefore although I allow you one minute, henceforth I will be very strict with regard to time so far as the present business is concerned.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Thank you, Sir. I have in my possession many other instances but I have no time. So, Sir, I should now like to appeal to the Chief Minister to issue a circular and to see that that circular reaches the police officers in the mufassal, telling them not to terrorise the people and not to create panic in the minds of the innocent villagers in the name of the Defence of India Act and the Defence of India Rules. With these words I commend my motion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move motion No. 58 standing in the name of Khan Sahib Mafizuddin Ahmed, that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, the object of this motion is to raise a discussion on the failure of the Government to give effect to the recommendation of Chaukidari Enquiry Committee.

Sir, this is as old as 1937-38. In 1937, I think there was a cut motion which raised a discussion that Rs. 44 lakhs which was to be spent on the Calcutta Police should be borne by the Calcutta Corporation and that the sum so released should be set apart for the villagers. Secondly, there was a non-official resolution moved by my friend Kazi Emdadul Haque which was passed in this House unanimously demanding that at least half of the salaries and emoluments of chaukidars and dafadars should be spent on nation-building works. As a result of this demand a Chaukidari Enquiry Committee was appointed on 28th July, 1938, and they submitted their report on the 24th August, 1940. Now, from that time onwards we are crying hoarse to give effect to the recommendation of the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee, but Government were not paying any heed to them. There are many points on which the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee have made their recommendations with a view to improving the chaukidari administration of the province. I myself gave notice of a Village Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, embodying many of the recommendations of the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee. Under section 21 of the Village Self-Government (Amendment) Act, the District Magistrate is given the

power to determine the number of and the salary to be paid to the chaukidars and dafadars of a union board irrespective of the opinion of the union board president. Sir, this has given rise to an anomalous position. The Chaukidari Enquiry Committee submitted its report in 1940, and they have recommended on page 117 that two-thirds of the amount of the cost, amounting to a total of Rs. 60 lakhs, should be met from the provincial exchequer. We understand that the cost of the police for Calcutta and other municipal towns is Rs. 55 lakhs and three quarter of that sum is Rs. 41½ lakhs. Sir, the municipalities should be made to pay that sum and if that is done the Provincial Government will in their turn be able to meet the cost of the chaukidar and the dafadar as has been recommended by the committee. Sir, I may point out that the cost of chaukidars and dafadars is met entirely from the provincial revenues in Madras and Bombay Presidencies and also in the United Provinces.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I have your kind permission to move the cut motions Nos. 56-57, given notice of by Mr. Premhari Barma and Mr. Lakshmi Narayan Biswas. I know that under certain convention a motion moved by or proposed to be moved by a member of the party behind the Government is not to be moved as such, but I submit that it is a very important motion and as it is now before the House, if you will kindly permit me to move it, I will be extremely obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, as you are aware, Sir Azizul Haque did not allow motions of one party to be moved by another party, and I do not propose to depart from that convention, at least without giving my serious consideration to this matter. So, I regret I cannot allow you to move that motion on this occasion, but I shall look into the matter and come to my own decision. However, you can very well speak on this subject on the general motion; I will allow you to do that, and that, I think, will serve your purpose.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. I think that a motion which is not being moved cannot be spoken to.

Mr. SPEAKER: But I think he can certainly speak on the general demand and he can speak on the same subject.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: But I submit that speaking on the general demand is different from speaking to any cut motion specifically.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal will not move the motion, but certainly every member of this House is entitled to discuss the general demand and in that connection bring in all matters relevant to that demand.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: To obviate the difficulty, I will take notice of the reference made here and I will make a statement because it contains the insinuation against the police which I find is not true and on which I shall place before the House the facts in the possession of Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: That you can do at the time of replying to the debate.

Mr. W. C. WORDSWORTH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish under the general motion to speak about civic guards and, since I am one myself, also about the excellencies of others in a similar state, and what I say about Calcutta is to be understood to apply to other places also that have their guards, and what I say about guards will be understood to apply to all those who do public defence services. Calcutta is a fair and noble city, worthy of its citizens' love and pride. Thousands of young men and men not very young are giving these services gladly and proudly—men of nearly every walk in life, men of every community in this city, men of every level of social, educational and material advantage. With self-denial they have trained themselves to be useful to the unfamiliar conditions in which they have been placed, they have learnt to perform duties not previously in their experience to patrol the streets by night and day, to manage crowd and traffic, to help in quelling street disturbances, to help the helpless, the confused, the panic-stricken; and when our city not very long ago came into the front of the battle, although they were not called on to do much, they were there, ready, alert and competent to do whatever the moment demanded.

Sir, when I pay a tribute to the men who rendered these services, I wish to pay a tribute to the women who have taken their part in corresponding services, but in paying that tribute I will make one difference from what I have said about men: nothing will induce me to divide the women of Calcutta into two classes, young and not very young! The result effected in the services they do is of three kinds: first, the judgment of their own conscience that they are doing work of civic value for today and days to come; second, the general approval of the citizens of this city; and, third, a reward unfortunately of another kind—the voice and the reason of a few, some of them strangely in the city's own Corporation, who from some defect of nature or inertia find themselves considerably sinking to the low levels of controversy and contention: the civic guard wishes to make its protest against that. Last year the height of achievement was reached when a member of this House called the guard either the scum of society or the scum of the earth, I forget which. Sir, it was explained to them that scum is something that in its turn rises to the top by its own natural qualities. This year a very popular member of this House falling sadly below his pleasant and friendly self for a moment referred to us as a band of ruffians or something of that sort: the condemnation was universal, allowing no room for exception. Therefore, I think it may be useful if I mention a few names from this House, looking up to Mr. Pulin Behary Mullick, Sir Hari Sanker Paul, and Mr. Griffiths, and outside we have Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, Mr. M. P. Ghatak, Mr. Unsuddowlah and many others: there are twelve Hindus, seven Muslims, one Parsi, two Anglo-Indians and two Europeans who are heading the guards of this city. Under them there are men of different communities. I may mention some of the categories in my own guards: schoolmasters, engineers, electricians, doctors, coal merchants—and if there is no respectability in them—an ex-Judge; if that

does not satisfy, I may go higher still and mention a barrister; and if that will not do, I may mention a popular film actor and producer, and personally I may say that in all the districts of the city there are men who have never done any work at all and surely you can find nothing more respectable than that. For this and other reasons I refuse to consent to the proposition that we are contempted and useless, that we are a set of crawlers and brutes: on the contrary, have we not for two years carefully and scrupulously guarded the houses, the shops, the godowns of men who are becoming prematurely wealthy during the distressed state of the country? But if I will turn the statement made the other day the other way round and regard it not as an expression of condemnation of what is there in the guard, but rather as a lamentation for so much good stuff seen in the dark, then I agree with all my heart and soul. There is a lot in Calcutta that should be caught and locked. What about our young athletes? Only a small proportion of them are in public service, and yet to give all leisure only to playing games at a time like this is childish. What about the many employees in the Government offices? Only a small proportion of these are doing any work outside their office hours. What about young students? Many are in, but there are thousands out, and there are thousands of students in Calcutta with equal proportions of their generous nature who would make very fine city guards something of which this city would be proud. Finally what about the Calcutta members of this House—a galaxy of distinction and talent. And last of all I come to the ministerial benches. What a stimulus if the Chief Minister joined! He could join my guards and I can promise him plenty of hard work and rapid promotion from the ranks if he showed himself deserving.

I regret, Sir, there is no more time available, but may I mention that if there is any work unsatisfactory in the guard, remember that we are a section of the people of Calcutta and if we are not all angels, perhaps part of the explanation is that Calcutta itself is not entirely inhabited by angels.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I have desired to speak a few words on the Police Budget, it is more with a view to draw pointed attention to certain aspects of Police Administration in the province than with a view to criticise the present Ministry for failure in this direction or that direction.

Sir, it has been pointed out through various interpellations and answers to questions on the floor of this House during the last few days that the public of Bengal still feel very much aggrieved about the actions of a large section of the police. The police debates in this House at the present moment take an unreal shape more because even now the old Job Charnock mentality continues in the administration of the Police Department. The police authorities feel that they do not owe their responsibility to the Council of Ministers so much as to some other quarter and as a result they are often actuated to do things in a manner completely devoid of public sympathy and public support, and unlike the police in other countries the police in this province still continue to be unpopular. I do feel, Sir, that this is not the time to make the police of Bengal more unpopular because

we at least feel that it is our bounden duty to see that the agents of peace and law should be helped as far as practicable during the present emergency, but at the same time there is no denying the fact that in different parts of this province things are happening, things have been allowed to happen, which go to show that the police are still acting to oppress the people in various directions. In Noakhali, in Midnapore, in the Balurghat subdivision and even in my humble district of Murshidabad the excesses of the police have known no bounds. I would only instance one case as to how Mr. R. C. Pollard, who behaved in a most rude and ungentlemanly way towards certain respectable members of the bar had ultimately to eat the humble pie and was convicted in a court of law for having assaulted a pleader at Berhampore, and that very gentleman still continues there without any penalty.

Sir, there has been from time to time public attention drawn to various things and one such thing was, as my friend Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur pointed out, the failure of the police in regard to the Sonua firing. In that connection, Sir, the tragedy of the situation was that the local Inspector of Police, Feni, who is now on leave for the last ten months, tried sincerely to find the culprits out. In his own preliminary report he did try to find out who were those military officers that created this mass terrorism and had perpetrated rape on unarmed women and looted the villages. And yet, Sir, surprising it was, the higher officers of police including the Superintendent of Police of Noakhali, who was rather vindictive, prevented that Inspector of Police from doing his duty and he was ultimately compelled for the vexatious treatment he got to seek to go on leave.

We have another instance, for which notice of a motion was given, of searches conducted in the Dinajpur Jail on the 4th February between 2-30 and 5 p.m. in the female ward. Outside police was brought in. The female ward was not in rebellion; the female security prisoners were not rebels. What was surprising was that armed police was brought in inside the jail for conducting the search—a search that was carried on for more than two hours—and the male staff which was brought in sat on the beds of these female security prisoners and they searched all their belongings. A letter of protest was sent to the District Magistrate but that was not heeded to, and some of those prisoners who came from respectable families felt extremely indignant at this action of police zulum. We do not know what authority the police had to enter the jail which is under the complete control of a Superintendent of Jail who has his own staff of warders and various other agencies to conduct searches, and we are not aware as to who permitted the police to go inside the jail and conduct searches with male police constables and policemen in the female ward for so long a time.

Sir, I have also had occasion to invite attention to various other cases of oppression, and we have lists of deaths due to police firing in various parts of Bengal from August, 1942, onwards and these lists show that contrary to the list given by Government the total deaths in Bengal due to police firing, except the Calcutta figures which are estimated to be more than 150, came to more than 100, so that there were nearly 250 cases of deaths alone

due to police firing in various parts of Bengal during the last few months. That being the state of affairs, it is high time that the Ministers should set their foot on the administration of the Police Department and they must be effective if they take charge of the Police Department. They should be effective Home Ministers and not permit things to be managed by some other agencies however big or however dependable that agency may be, and we submit that so long as the Ministers do not take the responsibility fully by conducting the affairs of the Police Department themselves and lay down the policy themselves and see that such a policy is carried out, the police in Bengal can never be popular.

Mr. W. E. SKIPWITH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, once again this House is presented with its perennial crop of criticism against the Police Administration—a crop which by its very nature loses no strength with the passing of the years. The allegations against the police are wide and, I suggest, ill-founded. They do too much, they do too little, they cost too much, they are not sufficiently numerous to protect the property of the people.

I have ascertained, Sir, that during the years 1940 and 1941 the percentage of detections of reported burglary cases in Calcutta was 42·6 per cent. and 38·5 per cent. respectively, while in theft cases the percentage of detection was 40·8 per cent. and 44·2 per cent. respectively. When it is remembered that many cases of a very petty character must be included in those reported, the success which has attended the efforts of the investigating officers is commendable and, I would add, compares favourably with the records of the London Metropolitan Police Force.

It is alleged, Sir, that the police are oppressive, callous and rude to the public. Figures which I have obtained regarding rude behaviour show that only 11 complaints were received in 1940 of which seven proved false, 12 in 1941, of which eight were false and 7 in 1942 all of which were dealt with departmentally. I suggest, Sir, that an average of 10 complaints per year against a force numbering over 10,000 officers and men is not an indication of a serious state of affairs.

The Police Poor Box is once again the subject of criticism. I am afraid I must disagree with my friend Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali when I say that contributions to the Poor Box are by no means compulsory, but the institution of this voluntary means of atoning for its sins benefits the general public in two ways. Firstly, it relieves congestion in the Police Courts and, secondly, it places at the disposal of the Commissioner of Police a Fund to be administered not only for the benefit of the deserving members of the public who have fallen on evil times, but also for crime prevention by sending undesirable characters out of the province. I have examined the rules controlling the administration of this Fund which is, incidentally, subject to annual audit, and have found no cause for criticism.

Now, Sir, it appears to me and my Party that there are two main factors which adversely affect the efficient operation of the Police Force. The first

is that they are seriously under-strength. The second, that they do not receive that measure of support and co-operation from law-abiding citizens which is so desirable.

It is a well-known fact, Sir, that the strength of the Police Force in the police-stations of Calcutta is today substantially the same as it was in 1905 in spite of the phenomenal increase in the city's population, both law-abiding and criminal. The following extract from the *Municipal Gazette* of August 16th, 1941, is interesting:—

"During the period 1901 to 1911 the increase in the population of Calcutta was only about 50,000. The population in 1901 was 847,796 and in 1911, 896,067. From 1931 to 1941, however, the population rose from 11·6 lakhs to nearly 21 lakhs. The increase in the last decade has been nearly 81 per cent.—a record for any city in the world."

It is clear, Sir, that the prevention of crime is just as important, if not more so, than the apprehension of offenders after a crime has been committed. It is a most regrettable fact that in this, the second city of the Empire, there are insufficient police to provide that elementary protection of the citizen against the law-breaker known as the "policeman's beat". Owing to this fact a burglar can lurk in the streets, force an entry into a residence and then proceed through the streets with his booty without very much fear of being seen. In the rural districts the police are even more under-strength and here their troubles are greatly increased by the inadequate and, in many cases, complete absence of communications. We should welcome, Sir, an assurance from the Hon'ble Minister that a very substantial increase, an increase which is long overdue, in the strength of the Police Force both in the city and the districts will be forthcoming.

With regard to the need for a greater degree of co-operation between the general public and the police there is little I can add to the remarks of my friend Mr. Clark when he spoke on this subject last year. No body of men can give of their best if they are unfairly criticised by and receive no help from their employers. We, on this side of the House, would welcome any move to attain increased co-operation and we hope that the police themselves will continue to leave no stone unturned to break through the barrier of prejudice and misunderstanding which divides them from the full co-operation of the public. We should also like to see a better understanding shown on the floor of this House of the difficulties of the Police Force and a greater degree of support of the manner in which they face their often disagreeable tasks from the Hon'ble Minister himself.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Civic Guards were formed in 1940 on a national basis to provide civilian soldiers for Calcutta. Recruitment was made on democratic lines, hence the rank and file was drawn from all classes, high and low, rich and poor.

For the rank and file to have attained the high standard of drill as was recently displayed at the Police Training School and for the Governor to remark that the standard of efficiency compares favourably with any

volunteer organisation in the province brings great credit to the Police Administration of the Civic Services. To maintain and keep the standard required for soldiers during these three years discipline and hard work were necessary. Consequently those who could not carry out orders and regulations imposed on them gradually dropped out of the organisation, under one pretext or another. It ultimately became a matter of the survival of the fittest or those most adapted for such a calling. Besides drill, patrol duty was done at nights from 7-30 p.m. to 11-30 p.m. and duty at the control shops from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 5 to 7 p.m. Again guards have to turn out at their Assembly Points during air raids when all clear is given to help the police in the case of any disaster. A voluntary organisation, officers without salaries, and men without wages, save a petty allowance of 6 annas per four hours, and for them to carry out duties as an auxiliary to the police! What greater performance do you want? Sir, efficiency should not be sacrificed for economy. It was only recently that a permanent paid staff of 30 men was sanctioned from 1st February, 1943. Entally was unable to supply the full quota being short of two, for the simple reason the majority of our men were employed and only trained men were required. Therefore to hear members in this House at this late stage referring to the rank and file of our National Civic Guards as the scum of society and as refuse really baffles one. To say the least it is uncharitable and amounts to the cruelest form of tyranny—ostracism. Sir, I ask, is it fair to ostracise your fellow-countryman because he happens to be less fortunate than you in receiving nature's gifts? Humanity pleads that all may be given an equal opportunity. Poor lads trained in my district Entally given the opportunity have made good. (Cries of "Hear! hear!" from the Muslim League Opposition benches.) A few are serving in the Air Force, Army and Mercantile Navy, while numbers have joined the A.R.P. where conditions were better, salaries being paid. Bengal cannot improve and go forward if her people are kept in watertight compartments according to their birth. (Cries of "Hear! "hear!" from the Muslim League Opposition benches.) Nature allows no such adjustment. Her sovereign law is subordination and dependence. Her gifts of intelligence, perseverance and honesty of purpose must triumph and so we find constant changes. The humble and meek are exalted while the haughty and mighty are brought down from their seats. Self-conceit was the first sin in our universe. Hence the fall of Lucifer. Want of humility is simply the want of all religion.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Griffiths, your time is up.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Yes, Sir, I will just finish. Let us remember that the greatness of England is due to the fact that she recognises merit. Her motto is "Every British soldier carries a field marshal's baton in his knapsack." This should be also Bengal's motto. (Applause and cheers.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, before the Hon'ble Chief Minister speaks, I would like to remind him that we have just heard that the chaukidars of the province are being allowed dearness allowance, but

villagers have got to find the dearness allowance for them. We would like to know if that is a fact or if the Government is finding the dearness allowance because if union boards have to find the dearness allowance, the union rates have to be increased and union boards find it difficult to find any additional fund. If the Hon'ble Chief Minister will give a reply on that point, we will be very much obliged.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I begin with the last point first. I have no information and I have made enquiries. I shall make further enquiries tomorrow and try to find out the fact.

Sir, as regards the cut motions, I wish to say a few words about the Poor Box Fund. This fund has been started by the Calcutta Police with the object of providing relief to the needy and distressed people in Calcutta and is administered by the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Headquarters. The fund is properly audited each year by the Accountant-General, Bengal. Distribution is made under the rules by the Commissioner of Police, and I do not think that, so far as its distribution is concerned, there has been any room for any complaint. The fund is intended to be applied in the following cases: To afford temporary relief to indigent persons praying for help, for food or clothing, or start in life; to meet the medical expenses in deserving cases; to afford relief to the ex-prisoners; to pay the travelling expenses and subsistence of mufassal witnesses of poor circumstances attending the Coroner's Court in Calcutta; to pay railway or steamer fare and subsistence and conveyance hire to persons found destitute in Calcutta. No single payment should ordinarily exceed Rs. 100. In exceptional circumstances the amount may be raised to Rs. 250——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Fund sanctioned by law?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: This Fund is for the purpose of charity.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question was raised whether it was sanctioned by law.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not find anything illegal in a Charitable Fund.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We are informed that Mr. P. D. Martyn has in his notes recorded that the Fund is illegal.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: How can a Fund be illegal?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is being illegally maintained.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So far as this Fund is concerned, it has been in existence for several years and it has given satisfaction. As I was reading, the objects are entirely for charitable purposes. Destitute persons and poor witnesses are helped and in some cases members of the public are also helped and it has been very greatly appreciated. Whether it is sanctioned by law or not, it is sanctioned by humanitarian

considerations and I think that is enough. (Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Why do you not form a Sub-Committee?) I do not think there is any committee. The Commissioner of Police assisted by the Deputy Commissioner of Police distributes the Fund according to certain fixed rules. I do not think any committee is necessary.

I come now to the remarks that have been made about the Police Administration generally and the irresponsibility of the Minister. Once again, Sir, I am faced with a big constitutional problem. In so far as the police carry out the duty of maintaining law and order, the Minister in charge of the department must take responsibility for the actions of the police in so far as they relate to their legitimate duties. Cases arise in which there may be some dereliction of duty and, as I explained yesterday, in these special cases Government are always prepared to see whether the allegations made against the police are justified or not.

I am aware, Sir, of the incident at Sonua in Noakhali where the military authorities are alleged to have committed certain acts which did amount to an offence under the Indian Penal Code. A magisterial enquiry under section 159 of the Criminal Procedure Code was held and although the main allegations were substantiated, there could be no prosecution because there could be no identification and all that we could do was to compensate the relations and dependants of the four persons who had lost their lives in consequence of the military firing.

Then there was a case in Duttapukur. There the military authorities permitted the soldiers to be tried in the ordinary court. They were tried and convicted. They appealed to the High Court and the High Court upheld the conviction. After that I do not know what happened.

Sir, generally speaking, I think, I would be right if I claim that gradually the morale of the police force is improving and that at the present moment the police service is much less open to criticism than they were some years ago. Year by year youths of respectable families are getting enrolled both in the Calcutta Police as well as in the mufassal police and the new additions that are made every year from respectable families have tended to raise the morale—not only the morale of the force but also the prestige of the work that is ordinarily done by the police. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Highly educated as well.) Yes, they are educated. As a matter of fact, appointments in the Calcutta Police are very much coveted by the graduates of the Calcutta University. Sir, I submit that the best way to raise the morale of the police force is for us, the members of the public, to co-operate with the police just as it is the duty of the police to co-operate with the public. Of course, there are black spots in the administration itself, but, as I have said, as times goes on, we find there is a decided improvement in this respect, and I cannot at the present moment approve of the general allegations made against the police. All I can say is that they are doing responsible work under very difficult circumstances and in many cases they are more sinned against than sinning. The allegations that are sometimes made are made very recklessly and they start under this

disadvantage that there is generally something like a feeling that since the man is a police officer, he must have done something wrong. There is that feeling and so they have to start under very great handicaps. But even under these circumstances they have in many cases stood to their posts and have done their duties under exceptional circumstances. All that I can say is that attempts are being made to improve the tone of the police force, to improve the morale of the force and to make them serviceable to the people. Let us hope that with co-operation between the leaders of the people and Government in this respect, we will have in the near future a police force which will not be open to any legitimate criticism.

Sir, as regards the search of the female prisoners in the female ward of the Dinajpur Jail, I may say that there was a search of their belongings but no personal search. Previously there was an attempt made by the female warders, but on their failure, the police had to search their belongings. It was a thorough and extensive search of their belongings—their letters, papers and everything—but there was no personal search. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why by the police in the jail?) All that I can say is that an attempt was made to search them, but they would not allow the search to be made and would not allow anybody to enter their ward, So, the female warders could not search. Then there was a surprise search by the police because it was necessary to have their belongings searched in consequence of certain information that was received. Although nothing suspicious was found, the search had to be made and as the warders and the jail authorities had failed, the police had to come and they made a surprise search, but they made no personal search. It was only their belongings that were searched.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division called, with the following result:—

AYES—12.

Banerji, Mr. P.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Mukherjee, Mr. B.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen-Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.

NOES—68.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.

Barman, Babu Shyama Prasad.
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Das, Mr. Monmohan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan.
Wallur Rahman, Maulvi.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yousuf Mirza.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 12, and the Noes 88, the motion was lost.

The motion of Mr. Serajul Islam that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Kazi Abul Masud that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. P. Banerji that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali that the demand of Rs. 2,71,63,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq that a sum of Rs. 2,71,63,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "29—Police" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-48 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Friday, the 26th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 26th March, 1943, at 3-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 5 Hon'ble Ministers and 200 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Number of Muslims dealt with under the Defence of India Rules.

***216. Khan Sahib MOFIZUDDIN AHMED:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of Muslims arrested, interned and externed under the provisions of the Defence of India Rules in Bengal since the assumption of office by the present Ministry;

(*b*) the number of them that are—

(1) students, and

(2) Alims; and

(*c*) their numbers referred to in (*a*) district by district?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): A statement is laid on the Library Table.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to the statement laid on the Library Table showing that five students have been detained under the Defence of India Rules, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that these students were detained because of some internal disturbances that occurred in the college and not for any political activities?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The reason in each case was given on the order that had been passed.

Distribution of kerosene oil in Bongaon subdivision.

***217. Maulvi SERAJUL ISLAM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Subdivisional Officer, Bongaon, district Jessore, made it a rule to distribute kerosene through the Home Guard Captains?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reason thereof; and

(*ii*) whether this rule is being followed elsewhere?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) No.

(*b*) (*i*) Does not arise.

(*ii*) Government have no information.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of information, Sir. This question has been answered by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department. Is he conversant with all the details? "Supply of kerosene" does not concern his department. He says "Government have no information". Has he got information in all matters connected with the supply of kerosene?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the allegation was that the distribution has been made through Home Guards. Therefore we took up an enquiry, and I have given the answer.

Alleged lapsing of an amount meant for giving loans to the riot-affected people of Narayanganj subdivision.

***218. Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether an amount totalling over a lakh of rupees paid for distribution as a gratuitous relief, *talukdari* loan, business loan, etc., amongst Hindu sufferers of the riot-affected areas in the Narayanganj subdivision lapsed on the 1st April, 1942?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) who is responsible for this; and

(*ii*) whether any action has been taken against him?

(*c*) If no action has been taken, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) No allotment for distribution as gratuitous relief was allowed to lapse. On the other hand a further amount of Rs. 23,751 was sanctioned for disbursement before the 31st March, 1942, which raised the total grant to Rs. 1,43,751. A grant of Rs. 60,500 and of Rs. 58,440 for distribution as *Talukdari* Loan and Traders' Loan respectively was surrendered as the amounts could not be spent before the close of the financial year 1941-42. Rupees 88,814 and Rs. 98,440 was, however, reallotted and actually distributed as *Talukdari* Loan and Traders' Loan respectively in the beginning of the current year.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the reason why money was surrendered and could not be spent by Government by the 31st March, 1942, was due to the fact that the Circle Officer in charge of distribution of these loans reported that no relief was necessary?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no information on the point. As I have stated here, the amount which was surrendered was reallotted.

Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Circle Officer reported to the Additional District Magistrate that no relief was necessary and he did not think it necessary to distribute any money for the purpose of giving loans? Has he got any definite information about the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no information about this matter.

Relief to agriculturists of some thanas in Nator subdivision.

***219. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware that due to heavy frost there was a considerable damage of crops of the agriculturists living within—

(1) Majhgaon, (2) Joari Unions of Baraigram thana, and

(3) Duari Union of Lalpur thana within Nator subdivision during last year?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what amount of agricultural loan and gratuitous relief has been granted to the affected people; and

(*ii*) the number of people that have received such loan?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether any amount was recommended by the Supply Officer of Nator; and

(*ii*) if so, whether any effect has been given to these recommendations?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) A hailstorm but not frost caused damage to the crops.

(*b*) A sum of Rs. 3,568 was distributed as agricultural loans amongst 303 persons.

(*c*) The Supply Officer recommended a sum of Rs.30,000 but as detailed enquiry showed that his report was highly exaggerated, a smaller amount was advanced.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is greater demand from the local people for more agricultural loan and the amount distributed was quite inadequate?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Adequacy or inadequacy of the grant depends on the reports of the local officers.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Supply Officer went to the spot then and there just after the occurrence of the incident, made a local enquiry and submitted a report?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, I do not possess that information.

KAZI ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is meant by "detailed enquiry"?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: By "detailed enquiry" I meant enquiry through the Collector of the district.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action was taken against the Supply Officer who submitted a false report thereby causing a loss to Government to the extent of Rs. 26,000?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: There was no loss to the Government.

KAZI ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the District Officer himself went to the spot and made a local enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That information does not appear from the record in my possession, but he made an enquiry and submitted a report.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is the practice that the Supply Officer would distribute the agricultural loan or it is a new practice?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Supply Officer probably makes his recommendations to the Collector. The whole thing depends upon the recommendations of the Collector. In fact, the grant is made by the Provincial Government on the recommendation of the District Officer.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he intends to take any action against the Supply Officer for such an irresponsible report?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is a request for action.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any gratuitous relief was advanced to the affected people there?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, the amount actually sanctioned was Rs. 75,000. The Collector reported that the Supply Officer recommended a sum of Rs. 30,000, but the detailed enquiry by the Collector showed that the Supply Officer's report was exaggerated. Gratuitous loans have not been separately shown.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who conducted the detailed enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is not stated here. The letter of the Collector is in these words, "On receipt of further information from the Subdivisional Officer, it appears that out of the allotment of Rs. 5,000 Rs. 3,560 was actually distributed to 303 persons." That is the information.

Distress in cyclone-affected parts of Midnapore district and realisation of revenue.

***220. Mr. KISHORI PATI ROY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that serious damage has been caused by cyclone in Midnapore district, last year; and

(*ii*) that acute distress prevails in the district?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of suspending the realisation of revenue from the people of the affected area till next year?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Yes, in parts of the district.

(*b*) The matter is under examination.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have received a petition from Mr. Harekrishna Das, formerly Head Pandit of Kanaidihi Middle English School of village Beniagachi, thana Contai, district Midnapore, requesting for agricultural loan and suspension of realisation of rent and for relief? The application was dated 15th December, 1942, which was addressed to the Governor of Bengal and the Chief Relief Commissioner, Mr. B. R. Sen.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I am concerned, I did not receive any such application; but if the information supplied by my honourable friend is accurate, then the Additional (Relief) Commissioner must have received the application.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What action has been taken on that application?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot say what action has been taken on this particular application, but as I stated before the House more than once, a very large sum of money has been spent on the two items mentioned by my honourable friend.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that up to the 5th March, 1943, although the application was dated the 15th December, 1942, and although promises were held out by the Subdivisional Officer of Contai that loans would be given, no loan was given to this party?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot say that.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the question of suspension of realisation of revenue has got the approval of the local officers or the Divisional Commissioner?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Well, it has certainly my sympathy. The question, unfortunately, has been framed in a manner which has compelled me to answer in a particular manner. The question is "from the people of the affected area till next year". That is the term.

Staying of certificate proceedings in certain cyclone-affected parts of Midnapore district.

***221. Mr. KRISHNA PRASAD MANDAL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware of the fact that after the last cyclone on the 16th October, 1942, certificate proceedings were started at the instance of the Khasmahal and Court of Wards against their tenants of the cyclone-affected areas in Contai, Tamluk and Sadar subdivisions of the Midnapore district?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the proceedings—

(*i*) are being carried out; and

(*ii*) have been kept pending and not withdrawn?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) No certificate was filed in Sadar and Contai khasmahals but only a few certificates were filed in Tamluk khasmahal and Contai Court of Wards in order to save limitation.

(*b*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) All proceedings have been stayed.

Office staff of Land Acquisition Collector, Calcutta.

***222. Maulvi AZHAR ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement with regard to the office of the Land Acquisition Collector, Calcutta, showing—

(*i*) the present number of employees in the said office;

(*ii*) the number of them that are in the—

(1) Upper Division,

(2) Lower Division,

(3) Process Service, and

(4) other employment; and

(*iii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus,

(3) Scheduled Castes, and

(4) others?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to starred question No. 222.

(*i*) Present number of employees in the office of the Land Acquisition Collector, Calcutta. 79 (including temporary establishment).

(*ii*) The number of them that are in the—

(1) Upper Division	17
(2) Lower Division	21
(3) Process Service	16
(4) Other employment	25
	79

(*iii*) The number of them that are—

(1) Muslims	31
(2) Caste Hindus	44
(3) Scheduled Castes	4
(4) Others	..
	79

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many Muslims there are in the Upper Division and in the Lower Division separately?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The position is this: I make the position clear—

The position of comunal ratio in March, 1939, when the rules came into force.		The present position.
Clerical staff (Upper and Lower).		Clerical staff (Upper and Lower).
Caste Hindus	... 20	19
Muslims	... 12	16
Scheduled Castes	... 1	3
Process Service.		Process Service.
Caste Hindus	... 7	8
Muslims	... 3	7
Scheduled Castes	... 0	1

	Other employments.
Caste Hindus ...	17
Muslims ...	8
Scheduled Castes ..	0

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Bengal Service Recruitment Rules are applicable in the appointment of these officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Communal Ratio Rules are, of course, applicable, but these rules have two limitations: they have no retrospective operation and, secondly, they do not apply to cases of promotion.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the paucity of Scheduled Caste officers in this department?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: There is no paucity. If the honourable member will be good enough to follow the answer which I have given to the honourable member previous, he will find that there is no such paucity if new appointments subsequent to March, 1939, are taken into consideration.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Sir, I do not mean the number after the introduction of the Communal Ratio Rules. The number which has been given as 79 may perhaps be all right. But I desire to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge why out of this total number of 79 only 4 posts have been given to Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The total number of 79 will not govern the position. The position is as I have indicated just now with reference to the applicability of the Communal Ratio Rules and the nature of its prospective application.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Sir, my question is: 79 officers were appointed in this department, but only 4 officers were taken from the Scheduled Castes. Now, what are the reasons for this paucity of Scheduled Caste officers in this department?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already answered that.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will reserve the future posts for the Muslims till the communal ratio is reached?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: There cannot be any general assurance to that effect. But although it is a request for action, I shall certainly see that the Communal Ratio Rules are strictly observed in the matter of future appointments.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that before the introduction of the Communal Ratio Rules the cases of the Scheduled Castes were totally neglected by this department?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot answer that question.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of temporary employments in the figure 79?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have given the number, but the number of temporary appointments is not separately shown in these records.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of these 31 Muslims, referred to in answer (*a*)(*iii*), are in the Upper Division?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The number of Muslims that are in the Upper Division is not shown separately.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: In the Lower Division?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have given the figures. Out of 79—Upper Division 17 and Lower Division 21; Process Service 16 and other employments 25. Out of these, Muslims are 31, Caste Hindus 44 and Scheduled Castes 4.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Muslims are generally in greater number in the lower service of this department?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This is too vague a question to answer.

Supply of seeds on loan to the distressed people of certain parts of Tippera district.

***223. Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether he is aware that an acute distress is prevailing in police-stations Burichong, Debidwar and Muradnagar in the district of Tippera owing to failure of crops due to breaches in the Gumti embankment?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what actions, if any, he intends to take to improve the condition of the crops?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Some distress prevails on account of damage done to crops in areas near the points where the embankment was breached.

(*b*) Agricultural loans of *rabi* seeds as well as "*Sowai*" loans of paddy seeds have been distributed in the affected areas.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the amount of paddy seeds distributed in the affected areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not got the figures with me. The subject matter of the question relates to the Agriculture Department.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any distress for want of paddy in the areas overflooded by the rivers Meghna and Padma?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Shahedali, that question does not arise.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has stated that distress prevails on account of damage done to crops in areas near the points where the Gumti embankment was breached. Now my question is whether there was any failure of crop in the affected areas in the district of Tippera overflooded by the rivers Meghna and Padma.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Here the question is about the Gumti embankment, and this is quite a different question which I am unable to answer.

Statistics of foodstuffs in Bengal and control of price.

***224. Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether the Government have any statistics of the foodstuff of the Province for the current year?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of their present stocks?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state under what basis do the Government control the prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) There is no suitable administrative machinery with the help of which precise information as to stocks of foodstuffs in the Province can be collected. A rough estimate of the principal food crops can, however, be prepared through the Director of Agriculture, Bengal.

(*b*) This is a question which I am unable to answer.

(*c*) The general policy of Government has been to control food supply. The reasons for this comparative non-success seem to have appeared from the first half of October with series of events beginning with the loss of Burma and culminating in a poor crop this year, the situation after the air-raids in Calcutta, and the stoppage of trade from other provinces and the

flow of large scale purchases. Government are now determined to show by practical measures on a very large scale how their method can be effectively applied.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if foodstuffs are still being exported from this province to other provinces?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have been assured that this is not so.

Mr. C. MORGAN: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that the estimates of probable foodstuffs obtained through the Director of Agriculture, Bengal, are very unrealiable, and, if so, do the Government propose to set up any suitable administrative machinery to deal with these statistics?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not made a personal enquiry as to whether the statistics collected through the Agriculture Department are accurate or inaccurate, but since we are faced with an unprecedented situation my view is—and that view will be immediately put into execution—that a bureau of statistics should be made available to Government for the purpose of collecting this class of information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken on the assurance given in this House last year and also on the amount which was provided in last year's budget which was proposed to be spent in the current year for meeting the expenditure in connection with collection of statistics regarding agricultural products of this province?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know. My honourable friend might address the question to the Minister in charge of Agriculture.

Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QUADR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he considers the desirability of taking a census of the stock of paddy and rice in the district of Chittagong lying with the agriculturists and merchants, through the agency of union boards?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This is a suggestion which I have been considering, and it is a suggestion which will certainly be borne in mind. But whether it will be done through the agency of the union boards as suggested by the honourable member is a different question.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether an assurance was given by Government that the stock of rice and paddy available in Bengal together with the stocks lying with agriculturists and merchants are enough to meet our requirements and that therefore there is no need for apprehension?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This is too hypothetical a question which I am unable to answer.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether from the trend of the answers just given in this House are we to understand that the Directorate of Civil Supplies worked so long without any statistics or data whatsoever before them?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend's speculative question is not one which is supported by facts. The Directorate had certainly worked upon certain figures. Now, those figures have been challenged, and obvious suggestions have been made for the purpose of a better collection of statistics, namely, through the creation of an Information Bureau.

Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has got any information to the effect that there is stock of rice in the Chittagong town?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I want notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In view of the fact that the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department gave an assurance to the House in reply to a question of mine that the statistics of food crops will be made available to the House within the course of a week and now that the stipulated time limit has expired, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the statistics will be made available to the House?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am unable to answer that question. If any assurance was given by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Agriculture, the question may be put to him.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: In view of the answer given by the Minister of Agriculture that Bakarganj is a surplus district, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food be pleased to state whether any statistics have been collected to show that the district of Bakarganj is a surplus area as a result of the present year's crop?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot answer that question offhand. I want notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consult his colleague, the Minister in charge of Agriculture, and give a reply to my question?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This is a request for action.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of employing the whole administrative machinery of Government including the Home Department to ascertain the real position?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall certainly consider the desirability of taking the step suggested. But this is a matter more or less for the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is still declaring Bakarganj as a surplus district in spite of the present deficit position of the district?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That question has already been answered.

Sales Tax.

***225. Maulvi AZHAR ALI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that most of the shopkeepers and small merchants dealing in taxable articles, realise sales taxes from the customers; and

(*ii*) that a large number of such shopkeepers and merchants do not pay the sales tax to the Government owing to shortage of their outturn?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No action is called for. The honourable member is referred to the Press Note, dated 14th November, 1941, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that in the press note quoted the tax has been described as an one point tax, that is to say, to be levied only at one stage from the producer right up to the consumer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that because of the absence of suitable legislative provision in the Act and rules made thereunder, the tax is being levied now at more points than one because in the body of the Act there is nothing mentioned about the one point character of the tax?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is nothing in the body of the Act, but we stated that in the notification to which I have referred.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of the fact that the tax is being realised at more points than one, because in the body of the Act itself there is no such provision which the administrative officers can rely on to prevent taxation at more points than one?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, this is a possibility, and it can only be remedied by proper legislation.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is aware that in cases where from a registered dealer the commodity passes to an unregistered dealer and then goes back again to a registered dealer for further distribution to an unregistered dealer or a registered dealer, the tax is levied both by the first registered dealer as well as at the last stage?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not necessarily, but it is possible.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is considering the desirability of having the question examined and issuing necessary instructions to the department to see that the intention of the law is actually carried out?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I point out that the summary of the press note comes to this: that an unregistered dealer who is not to pay any tax to the Government pays tax to the registered dealer at the time when he purchases his stock from the registered dealer. He has to reimburse himself by increasing his sales price by adding the amount paid by him as sales tax. So the contingency which my honourable friend mentions is possible. As regards whether action should be taken or not, I shall certainly consider.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In the press statement, a copy of which has been laid on the library table, it is stated that the receipts from the sales tax will be utilised for nation-building purposes. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if this is being strictly followed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the whole money goes to the common pool. There is nothing, I think, earmarked. But I think attempts are made to utilise the tax for expenses in nation-building departments.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the Commercial Tax Department is not facilitating larger number of registration of registered dealers as that may lead to some loss of Government revenue, because in the case of unregistered dealers the tax is calculated not only on the prime cost of the commodity but also the prime cost *plus* the commission and other supplementary additions that may be made by the unregistered dealer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information, but I will look into the question.

Nomination to Union Boards in Rangpur district and recommendations of members of Legislature.

***226. Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether

it is a fact that instructions have been issued to the District Magistrates to give utmost consideration to the recommendations of the members of the Legislative bodies as regards the nomination to the Union Boards in their respective constituencies?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the instruction has been observed in the district of Rangpur?

MINISTER in charge of the LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) It is reported by the District Magistrate, Rangpur, that the recommendations received from the members of the Provincial Legislature were duly considered before appointing members to the Union Boards of the district.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the suggestions from members of the Opposition were not accepted by the District Magistrate—not a single suggestion?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have no information.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in spite of all these circulars and re-circulars by Government, the District Officer is very much reluctant to have recommendations of the members of the Legislature considered?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I cannot answer a general question of that character.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Practice shooting in the Sonarpur thana.

67. Mr. HEM CHANDRA NASKER: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of a practice shooting in the evacuated area in Sonarpur thana, 24-Parganas, under Garia Evacuation Scheme?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any person has been killed as a result of the said practice shooting recently outside the evacuation area?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, are being taken by the Government to prevent the recurrence of the same?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) During practice on the 24th January, 1943, two women were killed.

(*c*) Measures which I do not consider it expedient to specify have been taken by the armed forces concerned to indicate the area within which firing is to be confined in such a manner as to minimise the risk of such accidents.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any compensations were paid to the relatives of or heirs to the two women who were killed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, in many cases compensations have been paid. About this particular case I am not sure. If they have not been paid, they will be paid.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House if the two women were killed outside the evacuated area?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I want notice.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this practice shooting means shooting at will or target practice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no idea as to what that kind of practice is, so I cannot answer.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether sufficient precautionary measures were taken from the beginning of the shooting?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: One of these cases came up before the court and there it was found that there was negligence. As regards the Sonarpur case, I am not certain about it because the papers are not with me.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what amounts of compensation were paid to the family of the persons killed and on what basis they were calculated?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has answered that he does not know whether any compensation was paid or not. Therefore that question does not arise.

Trial of a European soldier for shooting dead one Manindra Chandra Das.

68. Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that one Manindra Chandra Das of Budhair, police-station Burichang, district Tippera, was shot dead by a European soldier at Mainamati, district Tippera;

(*ii*) that the inquiring Magistrate discharged the soldier; and

(*iii*) that the District and Sessions Judge of Tippera when moved in the matter directed that the soldier be committed to the Court of Sessions for trial?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the soldier has been tried in a Sessions Court in accordance with the direction?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*d*) Do the Government propose to take any step for his trial in a Sessions Court?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) and (*d*) The case is already in the file of the Sessions Judge, but owing to the absence on active service at the front of the principal military prosecution witnesses, it has not been possible to present the whole evidence in court and the trial has been consequently delayed.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date on which the District and Sessions Judge, Tippera, directed the accused to be committed to the Court of Sessions for trial?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The date does not appear here.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where is the accused now, whether the accused was placed under arrest and kept under police custody or jail custody? The answer is that delay has taken place because the principal military prosecution witnesses are not available. But what about the accused?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I wish to add that the case was in the file of the Sessions Judge but owing to the absence on active service at the front of the principal military prosecution witnesses——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is about the prosecution witnesses. What about the accused?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I would like to have notice.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the accused was caught redhanded?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The facts are that on the 16th June, 1942, at about 10 a.m., Manindra Chandra Das went to "C" Company mess in the military camp at Moinamati to sell ducks and fruits. A European soldier named Burns purchased three ducks from him and paid Re. 1. Manindra demanded Rs. 2 from this officer as the price of three ducks. An altercation followed in the course of which this Burns shot Manindra. Manindra died as a result of gun-shot instantaneously. The magisterial enquiry revealed a *prima facie* case of causing death by a rash and negligent act not amounting to murder.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the accused confessed his guilt before the Magistrate?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It does not appear from the papers. I want notice.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether his arrest was on a bailable or a non-bailable warrant?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He was arrested and then might have been taken to court. I cannot say whether he was arrested on a bailable or non-bailable warrant.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date on which the accused was committed to the Court of Session?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That I cannot say.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date on which the order was passed directing the accused to be committed to the Court of Session?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will give all these details, but I want notice.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please make an enquiry and let us know whether the accused confessed his guilt to his superior officer or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes.

Agricultural officers in Rajshahi district.

69. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state with respect to Rajshahi district—

(*i*) the present number of agricultural officers in different grades; and

(*ii*) their respective duties.

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what suggestions, if any, they have made for agricultural improvement in the district?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) (*i*) Staff—

A. Subordinate Agricultural Service, Class I (Rs.125—250)—

(1) Superintendent, Rajshahi Farm.

(2) District Agricultural Officer, Naogaon.

B. One Overseer in the grade of Rs.50—80 and one Agricultural Demonstrator in the grade of Rs.25—50 posted at Rajshahi Farm.

C. Nine Agricultural Demonstrators in the grade of Rs.25—50 posted in rural areas.

D. There are certain other temporary staff employed in the district under different schemes, such as Indian Central Jute Committee scheme, "Grow More Food" scheme and Rice Development scheme.

(*ii*) Duties—

Superintendent of Rajshahi Farm.—He is in charge of the Rajshahi Farm and the demonstration and propaganda work in the Sadar subdivision.

District Agricultural Officer, Naogaon.—He is in charge of the demonstration and propaganda work in the Natore and Naogaon subdivisions.

Overseer and Agricultural Demonstrator posted at Rajshahi Farm.—They help the Farm Superintendent in carrying out the various experiments in the farm under instructions of the different Expert Officers of the department and in general cultivation for demonstration, seed multiplication and on economic basis.

Agricultural Demonstrators for rural areas.—One Agricultural Demonstrator is in charge of the office of the District Agricultural Officer, Naogaon, and two demonstration centres in that subdivision. The remaining eight Agricultural Demonstrators are in charge of one Union Board Farm and three demonstration centres each.

Other temporary staff.—They do the respective duties allotted to them under the different temporary schemes.

(*b*) and (*c*) The Superintendent, Rajshahi Farm, and the District Agricultural Officer, Naogaon, have to supervise works of the Overseers and Agricultural Demonstrators mentioned above in their district works in the Union Board Farms and demonstration centres where besides demonstration and cultivation on improved method with recommended seeds, manures and implements and seed multiplication, demonstration of making silage, artificial farm yard manure and water-hyacinth compost are also conducted. The District Agricultural Officers are also responsible for the purchase, distribution and realisation of seeds under the increased Food Production Scheme.

The work of the district staff on account of increased Food Production and various other schemes, mentioned before, has increased so much that it, being no better than a skeleton staff, cannot engage itself to such extensive district propaganda work for improvement of agriculture which it otherwise could have done.

In their respective spheres of work, the district staff, however, does a lot of propaganda work by public lectures, practical demonstrations, etc., for agricultural improvement.

Purchase of rice in "Denial Areas".

70. Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) who were the Agents appointed by Government to purchase and collect rice and paddy from "Denial Areas" in 1942;

(*b*) what were the terms and conditions of their appointment;

(*c*) how was the selection of the Agents made;

(*d*) what were the reasons for the purchase and removal of the rice and paddy from the "Denial Areas";

(*e*) what were the total quantities of rice and paddy purchased by each Agent, district by district;

(*f*) what were the total quantities of such purchases by each Agent removed outside the "Denial Areas";

(*g*) at what average price or prices were the respective quantities of rice and paddy purchased by each Agent;

(*h*) how have the respective quantities of these purchases been disposed of;

(*i*) who are the parties to whom the rice and paddy or any part of the same sold out and what are the respective quantities and average prices at which they were sold to each; and

(*j*) what quantities, if any, of the "Denial" rice or paddy were exported out to the Province or sold for the purpose of such export?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (1) Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar, (2) Mr. Ahmed Khan, (3) Mr. H. Datta, (4) Mr. A. Bhattacharya, and (5) Messrs. B. K. Podder & Co.

(*b*) An agreement was executed between the Governor of the Province in one part and the respective Agents on the other, wherein the terms and conditions have been stipulated. The broad features of the scheme were as follows:—

(1) Rice should be purchased up to the quantity indicated from the district, care being taken to leave food sufficient for a period of 12 months.

(2) Purchases will be effected within the limit of the price fixed by the Government.

(3) Rice and paddy as purchased will be transported and stored in the districts further north and north-west Rajshahi, Murshidabad, etc.

(4) Government will advance necessary funds. Commission of 4 as. per maund of rice or paddy purchased will be payable as expense of management to the Agent.

(*c*) Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar was at first selected as the sole Agent in respect of the scheme. Later it was decided to take in some more Agents to speed up the operation. The other four Agents were selected from some 40 applicants who appeared for interview in response to an advertisement published on the 1st May, 1942.

(*d*) It was decided to remove surplus foodstuffs from the coastal districts of the Province. The intention was to remove the surplus to safer and deficit areas as far as possible.

		Rice.	Paddy.
		Mds.	Mds.
(*e*) 1. Mirza Ali Akbar—			
Midnapore	..	160,242	3,533
Bakarganj	..	105,604	6,918
Khulna	..	8,444	37,470
		274,290	47,921
2. H. Datta—			
Khulna	..	16,309	385,220
3. A. Bhattacharya—			
Khulna	..	26,500	63,501
4. B. K. Podder—			
Bakarganj	..	79,357	16,280
5. Ahmed Khan—			
Bakarganj	..	82,229	32,010

(*f*) All the purchases on Government account by the Agents were removed outside the denial areas before the Central Government Scheme was wound up.

(*g*) Average rates per maund—

		Rice.			Paddy.		
		Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
Mirza Ali Akbar	...	5	7	0	3	6	0
Ahmed Khan	...	6	4	0	4	0	4
H. Datta	...	5	11	10	3	10	5
B. K. Podder	...	6	4	1	3	15	7
A. Bhattacharya	...	5	15	0	3	11	10

(*h*) Based on orders of Government, permit orders were issued by the Controller of Civil Supplies, Calcutta Area. Delivery orders were issued to the respective Agents and parties were accordingly informed to take delivery from the Agents. In some cases, supplies were made to Industrial Concerns under order of the Special Officer, Rice (The Hon. Somerset Butler).

In the mufassal permits were issued by the District Magistrate.

(*i*) A statement is laid on the Table. The statement gives the position as regards Denial rice as it stood on the 24th December, 1942. Since then further large quantities have been disposed of—all within this Province—mostly through Calcutta shops and Calcutta markets.

(*j*) Ceylon Government—68,750 maunds of rice.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (i) of unstarred question No. 70.

	Rice.	Average price.	Paddy.	Average price.
	Mds.	Rs. a. p.	Mds.	Rs. a.
Industrial area	88,136	7 10 0	..	..
Essential utilities	2,400	8 3 0	..	..
Calcutta Corporation	4,716	7 4 0	..	..
Army	2,634	11 0 0	..	..
Ceylon Government	68,750	10 8 0	..	..
Calcutta shops	68,600	6 14 0	..	..
Calcutta market	..	..	15,180	5 6
Cyclone Relief	52,761	9 6 6	44,050	5 9
District Magistrate, Howrah ..	27,500	7 4 0	5,846	5 9
Director of Civil Supplies ..	57,000	..	..	..
Other East Bengal Districts ..	86,848	4 14 0	31,800	5 9
			96,876	
Balance (Air Raid Reserves) ..	100,000	..	160,124	*Add* paddy milled.
	559,345		257,000	
Deduct rice milled from paddy ..	−83,345			
	476,000			

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer *(a)* *(1)* regarding selection of Mirza Ali Akbar, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who selected that party at first as a sole agent in respect of the scheme? It appears that regarding other agents a sort of advertisement and interview were gone into, but with regard to the first party nothing is mentioned. I would like to know who actually made the selection.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that there was an assurance given that these details would be given.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am prepared to give details. I have this vetted by the present Director of Civil Supplies. Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar was accepted as an agent by me. (Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: When please?) In early April when there was imminent danger of Japanese attack on Bengal——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister started by saying that he got a note from the Director of Civil Supplies, which he is reading out. But so far as the date April is concerned, I presume the Hon'ble Minister knows that there was no

Director of Civil Supplies on that date. Who is this "I" referred to? Is he Mr. L. G. Pinnell or somebody else? At that time Mr. Pinnell was not there as the Director of Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: It is dated the 25th March. I cannot decipher the signature, but I am giving the facts. I am told that he was appointed by Mr. Kirpalani. Early in April when there was imminent danger of the Japanese attack on Bengal, it was decided at the instance of the military authorities that surplus foodstuffs should be removed from the coastal districts of the province, but on a rough examination it appeared that the only surplus food was rice and that rice was surplus in three districts. Then there was a search for suitable agents, the criteria of suitability being (*a*) experience in the rice trade, (*b*) organisation to operate the scheme in the district, and (*c*) financial stability. Then, Sir, there was informal discussion with a number of parties by telephone or by personal interview. Among those parties may be mentioned the name of Shaw, Wallace & Co., Birla Brothers and some other parties. The net result of the contracts was that no party was agreeable to undertake the scheme to remove the surplus rice to safer districts. In the end Mr. Ispahani was called upon as the senior partner of Messrs. Ispahani & Co. and the scheme was put before him and he was asked whether he would undertake to do the work. He refused it at first mentioning, in particular, that he belonged to a party which was for the time being in opposition to the party in power, and to undertake a Government scheme of this nature might be misunderstood. Then the position was explained to him that the Government of India were financing the scheme and that it was in the interests of this province that the surplus should be saved and not allowed to fall in the hands of the enemy. Eventually Mr. Ispahani agreed, but he stated that his company would not directly accept this scheme and that he would introduce a reliable agent who may be formally appointed as agent and that his firm would stand guarantee against any possible loss or fraud on his part. The principle accepted was that guarantee would be taken from all agents except when the party is sufficiently well known, in which case the necessity of a guarantee may be waived. The candidate who appeared in answer to the advertisement circulated in the Press was interviewed by Mr. Somerset Butler. His final selection was approved apparently by Mr. Kirpalani. The final selection was shown to him. In fact, the other changes were made by the Hon'ble Mr. Abdul Karim who was then in charge of the portfolio.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Mirza Ali Akbar satisfied that condition, namely, that an agent must have organisations all over the province? Did he satisfy all the requirements?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The guarantor was a very well-known firm, namely, Messrs. Ispahani & Co.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the selection that was made by the first person singular number

"I" was on his own responsibility or in consultation with the Council of Ministers or the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I am aware, in the matter of these contracts the opinion of the Council of Ministers is not obtained, but if a contract is of such a nature as this it is obvious that the Hon'ble Minister is consulted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with regard to answer (*b*) (*1*), where it is stated, "Rice should be purchased up to the quantity indicated from the district, care being taken to leave food sufficient for a period of 12 months," if in the present purchase from the district of Midnapore and Khulna this principle or this feature of the scheme was adhered to?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The question of my honourable friend does not arise out of the main question. It refers to denial of rice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, Sir. One of the items in the scheme is stated here. I invite the Hon'ble Minister's attention and ask him whether he has seen that under sub-paragraph (*1*) of paragraph (*b*) one of the conditions was that care should be taken to leave food sufficient for a period of 12 months from the district of purchase. I want to know whether that stipulation was kept in the case of Midnapore and Khulna districts and, if not, may I know what action has been taken against the agent concerned for having violated the condition?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have no information whether the agent concerned violated any condition. I take it that actions in the districts mentioned by my honourable friend were taken in pursuance of the terms of the contract.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the rates for the different agents were different because the average rate per maund, as shown in the case of Mirza Ali Akbar, is the cheapest though the quantity supplied by him is the largest?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the commission of four annas per maund of rice or paddy purchased was very high as compared to the usual commission allowable or earned in the market?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is too general a question. I am unable to answer it.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that these purchasers or contractors purchased rice from places like Jhalakati and Barisal Sadar which are not within the denial area, resulting in rice famine in the district?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I was not the Minister in charge at that time and the records do not help me in answering this question.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what dates Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar and the four other agents were selected?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The dates are not here.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that one of the avowed objects, as stated in the Press Note and through the announcement made before this House by His Excellency, was to supply or make available the surplus for deficit areas when there was need for such supply?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In order to enable me to answer this question completely, I must have notice. I have not seen all these notes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that by appointing other agents besides Mirza Ali Akbar Government had to incur more expenses under the scheme?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot answer that question, but judging from the rates at page 5, no conclusion either way can be reached because purchases were made on different dates and from different markets.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: From the reply it appears that Messrs. M. A. H. Ispahani & Co. guaranteed the financial stability of Mr. Mirza Ali Akbar. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government was satisfied as to the all-Bengal organisation of Mr. Ali Akbar?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am sorry, I am unable to answer this question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*h*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that supplies from out of this denial rice were not permitted to be given by the local District Magistrates within whose jurisdiction the quantity was stored? It is stated in the answer that "in the mufassal permits were issued by the District Magistrate." This portion of the answer does not appear to be correct.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This is the answer I am giving. But if it is not correct, I shall make an enquiry.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to export for Ceylon Government of 68,750 maunds of rice, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased

to state on whose authority or on whose orders this quantity was exported out of the denial rice which, as is mentioned in (*d*), was meant for removal to safer and deficit areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I want notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister says in answer (*d*), "the intention was to remove the surplus to safer and deficit areas as far as possible", and to this answer a schedule is attached. From the schedule it appears that the Ceylon Government got 68,750 maunds of rice. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Ceylon is considered to be a safer or a deficit area?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That is a matter of opinion.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state for the satisfaction of the House what percentage of weight shortage arose on the purchases made by each of these agents?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In order to enable me to answer this question I want notice. The information is not contained in the record before me.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly state what was the outturn of paddy purchased by each of the agents in terms of seers of paddy to seers of rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall be glad to answer it if my friend will kindly give notice.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, this question may be held over in view of the fact that it was arranged that all the details would be supplied on a particular date and that these two are very important matters of detail.

Mr. SPEAKER: These are no doubt matters of detail, but these could not have been foreseen.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It is a very important material, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will show the good quality or the bad quality of the paddy purchased. But it is very difficult to answer it offhand.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*) (*2*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what price limits were fixed by Government as regards the purchase of paddy and rice?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not got the figures here. Obviously the reference is to the contract with the parties. But if my honourable friend insists on that information, I will certainly make that information available to him.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*) (*4*), is it a fact that the commission of 4 annas per maund was supposed to include all the costs including the driage and shortage referred to by Sir Nazimuddin?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have got a copy of the contract, but on that particular matter the contract is silent. The original is not with me, nor is it in the office. I made enquiries about it.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has been pleased to tell the House that it is a matter of opinion as to whether Ceylon is a safer or a deficit area. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which districts in the schedule except the cyclone-affected Midnapore are safer or deficit areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: When these purchases were made cyclone did not visit Midnapore.

Mr. SPEAKER: Question over.

Short-notice Question.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: May I draw your attention, Sir, to the short-notice question of which I gave notice first on the 18th March and then again on the 23rd about the present situation in Chittagong due to scarcity of rice and paddy? Sir, although I gave notice so long ago no reply is forthcoming up till now. While Government have been sleeping over it, the people of Chittagong have been dying of starvation.

Mr. SPEAKER: You say that you gave notice first on the 18th and then again on the 23rd March of your short-notice question. It is not necessary to send notice twice. I understand that they have been sent to the department concerned, but no reply has been received yet.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will you not help us, Sir, in this matter of vital importance?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot compel the Minister concerned to give a reply specially if the Minister does not like to treat your question as a short-notice question.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Sir, when people are starving and dying, the Ministers are not even caring to look into these matters.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: May I make a submission, Sir, that a short-notice question in order to be made admissible requires your permission and also the consent of the Minister in charge. So far as this short-notice question is concerned, it has not reached my hands yet and I can assure you, Sir, that as soon as it reaches my hands

I will immediately take action. But I may tell my honourable friends at once that special steps have been taken by me for the purpose of giving relief to Chittagong.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I also submit that when the Hon'ble Minister will come forward to answer Sir Nazimuddin's question, the Hon'ble Minister will be pleased to enlighten us about the difference between the prices of purchase and sale and what does happen with regard to the margin?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid my poor head will not be able to carry all that has been said by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal.

Conveyance allowance to the Assembly Staff for late Sittings.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I humbly submit that on the last occasion when we sat till quarter past ten many of the office assistants, stenographers, menials and others had to remain in office till that hour. May I, on behalf of the House, submit to you, Sir, that you will be pleased to properly remunerate them for their tiffin and for their conveyance back home either by taxi or any other mode of conveyance available at that late hour?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it is within my power to sanction that. I can only recommend to Government who is the sanctioning authority.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, we on this side of the House support this suggestion of Dr. Sanyal. We think it is very reasonable and proper.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. I shall take the necessary steps.

Point of Privilege.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: On a point of privilege, Sir. An Hon'ble Minister of Government who is entitled to sit in the well of this Chamber and participate in our deliberations has been defeated in the election. Sir, the news about the result of the election has been withheld by Government. It has not been allowed to be published in the Press. Sir, I want a ruling on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, you have made your statement before this House. This matter is not on the agenda, and it is certainly not a matter of privilege of this House. As far as I can see, this is a matter relating to the election of members to the Council and not to this House, and therefore the Council is the fittest place where this question of privilege can be raised.

Apart from that, I do quite realise that it is a question of withholding the result of the election of certain members of the Legislature. I take it that in that light this is a matter that may be considered to be a matter of

privilege of this House also. Even then, I think there is a distinction between the two Houses and the right place in my opinion would be the Council. Moreover, the Council is now in session, and therefore it is the proper forum where some gentleman belonging to your party in the Council may raise that point. Here, I think, I am helpless. It is for Government to do the needful.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I would not have raised this question on the floor of this House, because I know it refers to the election of the Council, were it not for the fact that the gentleman concerned is entitled to sit in the well of this Chamber and participate in our deliberations so long as he is a Minister of Government in charge of a certain department. Inasmuch as that gentleman is permitted to come here and is for all practical purposes except for voting as a member of this House, I feel that the publication of the result of his election is a matter which comes within the purview of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you do not mean his election but quite the contrary. I understand he has been defeated. Therefore, your argument does not hold good.

Applications for leave of absence.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now permit Mr. Satya Priya Banerjee, representing the Rajshahi General Constituency, Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar, representing the Barrackpore Registered Factories and Colliery Labour Constituency, and Mr. Khagendra Nath Das Gupta, representing Jalpaiguri-cum-Siliguri General Constituency, to be absent from the meetings of the Assembly for the period from the 15th September, 1942, till the end of the present session for which they find that they are unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

I beg also to move that this Assembly do permit Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, representing the Dinajpur General Constituency, to be absent for the period from the 21st September, 1942, till the end of the present session for which he finds that he is unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

The motions were put and agreed to.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

63—Extraordinary charges in India.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,58,29,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India".

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this motion with a view to raising a discussion on the agreement arrived at between the Central Government and this province regarding allocation of Civil Defence expenditure.

In the first instance, Sir, I want to place before the House terms of the agreement that has been arrived at between the Central Government and the Government of this province. It has been divided into three categories, poolable, non-poolable and special. Poolable expenditure includes expenditure on measures of Civil Defence relating to the public at large, *e.g.*, directive organisations and staff, wardens service, etc. Non-poolable expenditure includes expenditure on Civil Defence measures undertaken by Government in regard to its own property or for its own employees and the third one—the special one—includes civil defence measures undertaken by the Calcutta Corporation, Civil Defence measures undertaken by the other local bodies of the province and miscellaneous items of Civil Defence.

So far as non-poolable expenditure is concerned, the entire amount is to be borne by this Government. So far as the special one is concerned, in respect of the Calcutta Corporation 30 per cent. of the expenditure will be borne by the Central Government. So far as the remaining two-thirds are concerned, it will be shared between the province and the Calcutta Corporation but the proportion has not as yet been fixed by the Provincial Government. So far as the other local bodies, the municipalities in the mufassal and elsewhere are concerned, the proportion to be borne by those bodies has not as yet been ascertained.

Now, so far as the expenditure on this account by this Government is concerned, we find that Rs. 1,28,89,000 has been provided in the revised as the share to be given by the Provincial Government and in the present year it is Rs. 1,13,73,000. So far as our own province is concerned, our revenue position is very precarious as will be evident from the financial statement that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and Finance Minister has given. Our revenue is deficit by Rs. 1·53 crores and moreover we are in debt to the Central Government to the extent of Rs. 4 crores up to March, 1943, and Rs. 4·75 crores up to March, 1944, and there is no other way of raising revenues. So the position of Bengal so far as revenue is concerned is extremely bad and the income from jute export duty has also deteriorated due to war conditions.

There is another point. The decrease in revenue is also due to the fact that no stamp duties on contracts of war supplies are paid by the Central Government. If stamp duties were paid, that would have also come to the provincial exchequer and that would have added to the revenues of the province, but in the interests of the Central Government these contracts have been made stamp-free.

So far as the Corporation of Calcutta is concerned, it is well known to everybody that the finances of the Calcutta Corporation are in a very bad

condition. They had to curtail expenditure in the nation-building departments to the extent of 30 to 40 per cent. and so far as local bodies in the province are concerned, their condition is also no better. They are also suffering from deficits.

Sir, the Central Government give subventions to the provinces of Sind, Orissa and North-West Frontier Province only because they had agreed to create those provinces. In the present condition when Bengal is undergoing such a financial strain, it is the duty of the Central Government to come to her rescue and they should bear the entire burden of the Civil Defence expenditure so long as the war continues, because Bengal has no power either to raise revenue by additional taxation or to make any retrenchment in the expenditure that she is now incurring. So, we must look up to the Central Government to help us in the present financial crisis.

Before the reforms Bengal had a deficit to the extent of Rs. 150 crores and then also the Central Government came to her rescue. Now also the Bengal Government cannot improve her revenue position either by taxation or by retrenchment. The nation-building departments are starving. The Education Department, the Medical Department, the Public Health Department are not getting any money. Government is not spending even the smallest pie by effecting saving in other departments. In these circumstances, I think, the Government of India should be approached to contribute the entire quota so far as Civil Defence expenditure is concerned.

There is another point. What the Provincial Government will have to pay to the Corporation of Calcutta has not yet been settled. As has been stated by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his financial statement "our budget estimates do not include any provision on account of a subvention for the Calcutta Corporation—an inevitable liability". That we are to help the Calcutta Corporation is a foregone conclusion and that we are also to help the municipalities and other local bodies is also a foregone conclusion. But we do not know how much amount the provincial exchequer will have to spend for A.R.P. and other Civil Defence expenditure for mufassal municipalities and also for the Calcutta Corporation. So our liability on this account will grow much more than apparently appears from the figure that is now available. So my humble appeal to this Government will be to represent our case to the Government of India so that the entire burden may be shifted from this province to the Government of India.

With these words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the organisation of the Directorate of Civil Supplies.

Sir, on a previous occasion or rather on several previous occasions during the course of the present session we had raised different issues in connection with the Directorate of Civil Supplies, and if I have chosen to harp on the same or similar topic today it is only to emphasize the great urgency of the

subject and also to suggest certain concrete measures which might in our humble opinion improve the organisation of this most vital department at the present time. Sir, we have so far found, and I believe the Government also, at least the Council of Ministers of the Government also realise that the present organisation of the Civil Supplies Directorate has failed, I would not say miserably failed but failed very largely, in achieving their object. It is now, therefore, incumbent and necessary for all sections of the House to put their heads together and find out how and in what respects they have failed and again to show in what directions the remedy appears to us to lie. Sir, the first reason that appear to us to lie behind the failure was that the selection of the officers was made in a hurry and made by persons who were not always responsive to public opinion. Sir, this Directorate of Civil Supplies was organised towards the middle of August last and certain number of officers had to be drafted immediately and quickly from the Executive Department of Government and from elsewhere to be in charge of a most important growing department which was taxing the energies of the Writers' Buildings for some time before that. We do not complain about the manner in which the Director himself was appointed, *viz.*, Mr. L. G. Pinnell. But, Sir, thereafter, after Mr. Pinnell we found selections were made not with sufficient scrutiny or examination of all aspects of the question. What was the result? There were immediately two officers taken from the then office of the Controller of Prices: one a Hindu officer and a few days later another a Muslim officer. These two officers by the time they were working in the office of the Controller of Prices were notorious to have been influenced by persons from outside. Some of them, at least one of them had large sums accumulated and had two houses built within the course of two months. I believe the Government has had reports about him and in spite of that this officer was taken on in the Directorate of Civil Supplies as one of the Assistant Directors. He is still there prospering and happy. There is another officer who was serving in another office as an Office Superintendent or something like that. He was taken on this job and given another post of Assistant Directorship, and immediately we found that he was drawn into liaison with the galaxy of turbaned merchants who began to come not only to office but to his house and gradually some illicit connection developed. (Laughter.)

In this way the Directorate of Civil Supplies has, in spite of best wishes probably, permitted itself to be tainted with, I would not say generally but at least some have tained the department with a dangerous propensity. In an organisation on which depended the life and soul of the people we should have men who are absolutely above suspicion, and I would appeal to the new Food Minister to see that in his selection of men he would exercise sufficient scrutiny, so that there may be no room for doubt about the honesty, integrity and sincerity of his officers.

Sir, I submit that there has been too much of a fetish made in certain quarters about commercial men being drafted for work in the Civil Supply Directorate. What has been the result? The commercial men or man that have so far been imported into the department have either shown their utter

incompetence to deal with the problems of the department or otherwise have failed to do things in the manner that they were expected to do. I am using my words, Sir, very cautiously. The Food Grains Purchasing Officer and before that there was one Special Officer for rice and paddy, they have been nice gentlemen, but, Sir, the selection was made, I understand, on the recommendation of a certain Divisional Commissioner who lived in the same house as Mr. Campbell of Shaw Wallace and Co., lives. The point is that the selection was not made by the Ministers, it was not made by the Council of Ministers, it was not made even by the Director of Civil Supplies himself, but on the recommendation of somebody who had some personal interest directly or indirectly in the selection, and as a result what happened? We find large orders being placed with the firm of Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Co. Mr. Campbell and the Divisional Commissioner were friends and that Divisional Commissioner who recently returned from Chittagong knew only one good Chittagong merchant who was connected with a bank, and therefore was supposed to be an omniscient expert. As he was writing out bills and drafts in the bank there he is supposed to know many things of the trade, as I know most of the trade, because I am a transport man. So he knows all about trades and therefore he has been drafted to work in connection with the purchase and distribution of rice and paddy. However, well meaning that may be, Sir, the result has been disastrous. The Hon'ble Minister will do well if he sees how far this fetish of having on the staff commercial men has been successful. Sir, I submit that there may be some necessity for commercial views being obtained for the running of the administration. But there should be no necessity for the administrative work of the department being entrusted to any commercial man. This can be done in the ordinary course and views can be had by setting up a proper advisory council on which representatives of commercial organisations and the Chambers of Commerce could be invited. If necessary, special *ad hoc* committees may be constituted with commercial men on such committees to advise on specific trade or on specific transactions. It is not possible for one commercial man who is dealing in one particular essential commodity to know all about other essential commodities. He must either be guided by commercial opinion obtained by some means outside his immediate knowledge, or he must be a genius. Sir, it is much better to leave the actual administrative part of the department to some officer of the Crown who is a whole-time officer and on whom ultimately the responsibility must devolve. I submit that in that organisation let the Government choose the best men that Government has got in the province, best men from the Civil Services—Indian Civil Service as well as Bengal Civil Service, and I dare say there are any number of good men from whom Government can make their choice. Sir, today we find that most of the brilliant scholars of the University who have been students of economics with brilliant careers both in the University as well as in the Civil Service have been drafted on, for what unknown reasons I do not know, to the judiciary. Most of them, let me not name the persons, most of them are either discharging their duties in secluded places, in the post of Judgeship or some of them have been taken over by the Central Government. Sir, if names are not galling, I will state the names

of Mr. Karuna Kumar Hazra, Mr. B. K. Guha, Mr. Saibal Gupta, Mr. R. K. Roy, Dr. Naba Gopal Das and Mr. Hilaly. These are some of the officers who understand the problem, who know the country, who have secured popularity in the discharge of their duties and at the same time who have shown their independence of spirit both in their public as well as in their official duties. Government ought to try to get hold of such men who can be trusted to the fullest extent and at the same time who can inspire public confidence in a work of this character.

Then, Sir, having got this set of men to be immediately attached to the Directorate, I suggest that Government should have associated with the task of the Central Food Committee or Council. An announcement or promise for an announcement was made, but still we do not know what is going to happen with regard to the same. There should be a series of committees of that character throughout the province, in the districts, in the subdivisions, and, if necessary, in union boards. The problem of problems is to create public confidence. It is not merely a question of forcible acquisition and distribution according to a plan, but, Sir, the problem really is to let the people of this province take upon themselves the responsibility of feeding their own brethren and also to convince them that whatever they take away from one district, every grain of it would go to feed the children of the soil here in this province and not taken away or hoarded up either by unscrupulous persons or even by those who in the name of Government are keeping large hoards of their stocks.

Sir, I now come to the other side, namely, distribution. With regard to distribution we strongly feel that the setting up of a Distributing Trades Tribunal has been a complete failure and is likely to create more difficulties than they are likely to solve. The selection of the personnel of the Distributing Trades Tribunal has been most unhappy. You have there two show-boys, one a Hindu and another a Muslim, with a European who really manages the show, and he was taken from a bank where he was drawing a salary of Rs. 1,400 or Rs. 1,600, *i.e.*, much less than what he is now being given here. And what was he after all? He was after all a glorious clerk in the bank. He was the Superintendent of the Security Section and there he had nothing to do with trade or trades or he did not know anything about actual traders who are likely to be affected by this decision. This gentleman, Sir, has shown his integrity in such a manner that he had found that the only possible dependable Personal Assistant that he could have was his wife and he has managed first to put up a note to have the sanction of the post of a Personal Assistant and then get his wife appointed to that post. It is on such honest and sincerely working persons that we have to depend for proper selection of distributors. Sir, if a man who is given Rs. 2,500 by way of salary and emoluments will stoop so low as to think that the little money that would go to the Personal Assistant must also come to his own pocket through his wife and thereby he would deprive some other person of his or her legitimate earning, then surely such a man cannot be entrusted with an important work like this.

Mr. SPEAKER: Why do you look at it from that point of view? Why do you not look at it from the other point of view—confidence and efficiency.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If no confidential work could be done except through one's wife, then the whole Government machinery could not be run. Then every Secretary of the Government should have his wife for dealing with important papers and files. Surely the Distributing Trades Tribunal is not more important than the Home Department and I believe Mr. Porter ought to be given his wife as his first Assistant!

Sir, what is the suspicion? The suspicion is that certain nefarious things are going to be perpetrated by this officer and nobody else should know these things. He has been impelled to take his wife because he wants to hush up or cover up his guilts. That is a very serious implication from which this Distributing Trades Tribunal should be kept far aloof.

Sir, I charge that this Distributing Trades Tribunal has also shown its utter inefficiency and complete want of confidence has been created because of the action of the Secretary. Therefore, Government should have no hesitation in dissolving it straightaway. And what Government should do instead? Government can have one I.C.S. officer of the position of a District Judge to be entrusted with final selection and to be attached to the Directorate of Civil Supplies. He can, after consulting the commercial representatives, have certain schedules or rules framed for selection and in those rules—it should not be difficult to lay down rules and conditions which will make it impossible for new entrants or for surreptitious entrance of unknown and undesirable persons—and those shop-keepers who are already there from the trade and who have been already experienced in the line should be selected by that executive officer after having consulted the trade concerned. For a post of that character a person with judicial experience or a Judge of the District Judge's rank may be selected and we can have the whole work done without any trouble and the public will have confidence in the decisions thus arrived at.

Sir, I do not want to take much time, but I would like to end by only suggesting one thing regarding the proposed rationing scheme in Calcutta. Sir, rationing is really a very important question and it requires a very large number of officials. It will, as I see, involve large expenses also and I presume that the appointment of a large number of men would be required. I submit that in the fixation of the standards of qualities or merits on which such men should be selected, very stringent conditions should be laid down. If possible, Government should bring senior Deputy Magistrates from districts to take over this work and make up the gap with comparatively junior men at those places. Associated with these men might be a number of younger men, either University graduates of standing and reputation or teachers of schools who have temporarily found it difficult to continue because of the present emergency. These men might be entrusted with this good work. I am sure they will do it with greater zeal, efficiency and enthusiasm and they are much more dependable than the class of persons who are likely to be drafted.

Sir, I submit that there would be scope for a large number of non-officials also who would, I believe, most voluntarily and cheerfully undertake the responsibility for such work in each ward or sub-ward and in districts and municipalities and their wards concerned. These non-officials should be given proper scope and we should see that the entire Directorate is helped with the co-operation of non-official agencies as much as possible.

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, I move this in order to raise a discussion on corruption and jobbery in control of prices and supply of food articles.

Sir, I feel sure that everyone in this House, everyone in this benighted country knows it as a matter of fact that corruption and jobbery reign supreme in the affairs of food supply. Sir, it is clear that a sort of mutual agreement exists between the profiteers on the one hand and the officers of the Civil Supplies Directorate on the other. I could quote chapter and verse of specific instances, which are indeed too numerous to count, where control shops have been violating all orders and merrily indulging in black-marketing openly in broad daylight and with the apparent connivance of officials whose duty it is to check corruption.

Sir, we know that the prices of sugar rose sky-high recently though enough stocks were held by the approved dealers and Government agents. They take recourse to the most palpably dishonest means of showing large quantities of the commodities as sold to licence-holders, but actually they sell these commodities in the black market. The Civil Supplies Department has issued a large number of licences to dealers which simply authorise them to deal in particular commodities. There appears to be no register as to how many such licences have been issued and no attempt is made to see if they get supplies or how they get supplies. On top of this, certain permits are issued to certain individuals or firms. Most often when holders of these permits do not happen to be official concerns, they have to run from shop to shop of Government approved dealers and they meet with the same answer, namely, "All rice sold", "All sugar sold". The Confectioners' Association is one such body—they are the sweetmeat-makers in the town and they complain that they cannot obtain sugar in spite of permits and have to buy at black market rates. They have met with refusal for a definite quota and they have been castigated as abettors of black markets! Sir, could anything be more preposterous than this?

Sir, I would draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department through you to a news published in the newspaper "Janajudha" of the 20th January last to the effect that a control shop at 34B, Sashi Bhusan Dey Street, not only refused to supply *atta* to the people assembled in queues, but openly sent out 2 cartloads of *atta* for sale elsewhere, and apparently no action was taken by Government. Every case handed over by the public is invariably hushed up, and these people go on merrily making money and helping the officials to share in the spoils.

Sir, in respect to wheat the action of the Directorate is extremely perverse and senseless. There is no control of price and a man selling at Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 per maund cannot be prosecuted, but Government have theoretically commandeered the whole supply. There are many Native States and other places wherefrom wheat can be brought to Bengal and where wheat is still cheap. But if anyone brings any wheat, Government requisitions it and sends it to one of its agents but never to the public except perhaps an infinitesimal portion to controlled shops.

Sir, theoretically speaking, therefore, none should have got any flour or *atta* in the market except through the controlled shops and yet these are being openly sold out at exorbitant prices. Sir, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to say wherefrom it comes and not to make the parrotlike repetition of the same statement "every attempt is being made to stop profiteering".

I repeat it, Sir, and challenge the Government to refute the charge that corruption and jobbery reign supreme in the control of price and supply of foodstuffs and that Government have not only signally failed in their duty but have actually been aiding and abetting profiteers in a shameless manner.

Sir, we are being told repeatedly to believe that shortage of rice in Bengal is only about 10 per cent. on the top of which we have a surplus from the last year's bumper crop. But would the Government be pleased to inform the House why then the price of rice is soaring so high? Allegation of hoarding by private individuals can never be the correct answer to this because we know that only an infinitely small number of people can afford to hoard.

Sir, more than a score of highly paid officers and hundreds of other smaller luminaries have been making a mess of the whole thing some for dishonest gain and others for their sheer incompetence and carelessness.

With these few words I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Sir, I beg to move, that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary Charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a debate on the indifference in the matter of safety of the lives and properties of the civil population in rural areas where they have been exposed to the dangers of bombing by enemy planes particularly in the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Tippera. I beg further to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary Charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the indifference in the matter of affording shelters to the civil population in rural areas, taking air-raid precautions in areas exposed to bombing by enemy planes, granting relief to persons rendered homeless by air-raid, granting compensation to the dependents of persons who have lost their lives as a result of air-raid, to persons who have been wounded and whose properties have been destroyed or damaged.

Sir, Chittagong being a frontier district serves as a land base for taking a counter-offensive for the purpose of reconquering Burma and also for taking

defensive measures against the enemy in case of invasion. The Feni river which forms the natural boundary between the district of Chittagong and Noakhali is the next link in defensive organisations and military preparations are proceeding for the purpose. Therefore there is every possibility of freequent air-raids on the military bases in Chittagong and Feni. As a matter of fact Chittagong has been bombed several times and the worst sufferers are the civil population and the labourers who work in connection with military preparations for the construction of aerodromes. Sir, Feni also has been bombed more than once. A number of aerodromes are under construction within the Feni subdivision. Some of these air bases are situated in rural areas surrounded by thickly populated villages and the approach roads to these air bases have on both sides homesteads of villagers. All these places, namely, Lemua, Pathangarh and the neighbourhood of Feni town have been bombed more than once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sur, while talking on military preparations you must be very careful and very cautious. I think in these matters the less said the better.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Yes, Sir; I have been most cautious in my speech, and I am not saying anything that I am not personally aware of.

On the 16th of December last, the Lemua air base was bombed between 3 and 4 p.m. as a result of which several persons were killed and wounded. In one single private house eighteen persons were killed on the spot and three only survived. The house and the adjoining garden were smashed and all the cattle in the House perished and all the moveables were destroyed. In another house a bomb fell——.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sur, I think you are speaking from your own private information and not from any authentic information published by Government. You must not give out any information you possess unless you have definite personal knowledge. You must not speak of news based on rumour.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Sir, I am taking full responsibility for what I am stating.

I personally went to the spot just after the air-raid and I saw with my own eyes the scenes of devastations caused by enemy bombing. They can better be imagined than described. I have also tried to elicit the actual number of deaths from persons who had been to the spot immediately after the occurrence and had been there for several hours. And my information is that at least 45 deaths occurred at Lemua which is only five miles from Feni town. Pathangarh is about seven miles from Feni. On the 17th January again there was bombing on the same base at Lemua a little after 9 p.m. It was a moonlit night. This time incendiary bombs were mostly dropped and the houses adjoining to the base were burnt to ashes. Sir, three months have since elapsed but no A.R.P. measures have been taken in this

area. The people of the surrounding localities have therefore become panic-stricken and they have practically no sleep especially during moonlit nights and any sound from the air strikes terror into the hearts of the people. Sir, this air base is situated, as I have already said, in the midst of thickly populated villages. Further, some of the fruit-bearing trees in several adjoining houses have been cut down to facilitate landing of planes on the place. From reports we find that on the 21st March Feni aerodrome has again been bombed and the report is that the extent of damage is extremely slight and the number of casualties is very small. People inhabiting that locality submitted several representations to the Subdivisional Officer, Feni, the District Magistrate of Noakhali and the Hon'ble Chief Minister. We do not know whether that representation has reached the Hon'ble Chief Minister and has been placed for his consideration. If it is the intention of local officials of Feni that people in that locality exposed to dangers of bombings should be compelled to abandon their homesteads and agricultural lands and that the Government will be relieved from the burden of payment of compensation in case of evacuation, the intention is certainly dishonest. But Sir, the position is this. The people are ordinary cultivators; they cannot run away to some other place for shelter abandoning their homesteads and lands because in that case they will have to die of starvation. Government should in all fairness remove these people from the danger zone and accommodate them in some safe place or at least ask them to evacuate their families and children and grant them maintenance allowance, and if they acquire their homesteads and lands, should grant them sufficient compensation. We do not know whether Government have granted compensation to the dependents of persons who lost their lives and who have been wounded, or whether any compensation has been awarded to persons whose properties have been destroyed or damaged.

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary Charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion about the failure to give proper representation to Muslims in A.R.P. services.

Sir, this question was raised on the floor of this House last year when the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in order to pacify the Muslims who were groaning under the gross injustice done to them in his usual characteristic irresponsible manner promised a thousand appointments to the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes so as to right the wrong which admittedly has been done to them. Since this promise a good deal of water has flown down the river Hooghly under the old pontoon bridge and the new cantilever Howrah bridge, but the promise has yet to come. I admit, Sir, some Muslims have been recruited subsequent to the promise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. We have found that throughout the debate the Hon'ble Minister in charge has one ear caught by an esteemed member of the House. Are we to presume

that the other ear is available for my friend Mr. Nasarullah? For the last half an hour we are finding that a member who often himself gets up on points of order has usurped the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge.

Mr. SPEAKER: He says that he is hearing the debate.

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Besides, all the Muslims who are recruited are in subordinate, menial and lowly-paid jobs. The key positions are still in the hands of the Caste Hindus who dominate the entire A.R.P. organisation. Sir, for an efficient working of an organisation like the A.R.P. it is essential that public support and co-operation should be forthcoming, but I am sorry to have to say that the Muslims have no confidence in this department where the members of their community find no important place. This is a most regrettable position and the sooner it is rectified the better it would be for all concerned.

Sir, so far as the appointment to the women section is concerned, Muslim ladies are conspicuous by their absence. The plea that qualified applicants were not available cannot hold water. For, for the post of the Officer in charge, Wardens Service, several qualified Muslim ladies were interviewed and it was decided that a Muslim would be appointed. One of the candidates was the Head Mistress of a Government High School, another a graduate in science and the third also a graduate of position and status in social life. But strange to say all these qualified candidates were thrown overboard and a Hindu lady with no qualification was appointed for reasons known best to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department alone.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: For which post?

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Officer in charge, Wardens' post.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the name of that lady?

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: I do not know.

Sir, this is an instance how Mr. Fazlul Huq is acting up to his promise. Is it to be any wonder, therefore, that Mr. Fazlul Huq's promises have become proverbial like Peter the Drunk?

The other day only Mr. Fazlul Huq had the audacity to say on the floor of the House that half of Calcutta is at his back, but, Sir, the country has demonstrated in no uncertain manner its want of confidence in Mr. Huq. Six important constituencies delivered their verdicts yesterday. Let me, Sir, through you, again assure Mr. Fazlul Huq that Bengal's Muslims are doing well and if Mr. Fazlul Huq still thinks that he has the confidence of the Muslims and Muslim support, let him resign his seat and go back in the country. I assure him that he shall be able to know the verdict of Muslim Bengal which he will remember for all times to come. Muslim Bengal knows how unfairly she has been treated by Mr. Fazlul Huq and his Cabinet and these are the reasons of the award of yesterday.

Sir, with these words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, to which Hon'ble Minister should I address my speech on this cut motion? I propose to request Government to direct an enquiry regarding the organisation of Home Guards. Will you permit me, Sir, to go to vote straightaway on this motion? I do not see any other way to compel the Hon'ble Minister to be present.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu is there. You need not worry over this matter. You go on.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary Charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the organisation of Home Guards and failure to make the same popular.

Sir, hardly any speech is necessary to invite added attention to the urgency of the organisation of a proper Home Guard for the province of Bengal. But, Sir, it is regretted that, in spite of our repeated demands to that effect, the Government have not moved as yet to have such a proper organisation made as would inspire the confidence of all sections. Sir, I had tabled starred question No. 195, regarding the proposal for organising Home Guards in Bengal, to which a reply was placed on the table, but, Sir, for reasons best known to the Hon'ble Minister in charge, namely, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the answer was not ready on the day it was tabled and it was held over. Up to this day, we have not heard any definite proposals in that connection, but we have only been given to understand in course of the general discussion of the budget that the Council of Ministers did approve an organisation for Home Guards with popular support and that the scheme after their approval was duly forwarded to the head of the executive. I would like to know what has happened to that scheme and whether it is a fact that the scheme has been given a complete hibernation and it will probably never see the light of the day, because the head of the executive or the coterie of his officers feel that it might in some way or other enable the people of Bengal to have an independent organisation of their own to deal with peace and tranquillity in the rural areas. The essence of that scheme which was drafted after consultation with the Congress President was, Sir, that Home Guards would be organised with the Hon'ble Minister in charge at the head advised by a representative Central Advisory Council, composed of nominees of leading political parties and that Advisory Council would be prepared to have as its main executive officer the Director of Physical Education, Mr. Buchanon. The Director of Physical Education was considered to be more suitable than the Police Chief, because of his association with a large number of young men and of his practical experience in the training of young men and women in physical education. It was also part of the scheme that the captains and adjutants of respective areas would be selected in

consultation with the leading political parties and organisations of the areas, so that only such persons would be selected who had more or less universal following. It was further laid down, so far as I am aware, that the Advisory Council would finally give the seal of approval to the lists of captains and vice-captains throughout Bengal and local District Officers would be helped by similar Advisory Committees in their respective areas, who would have not merely casual advisory powers but would be associated most intimately in the functioning and organisation of the entire Home Guard organisation in the province. Sir, as a concession to the views of a certain section of Civil Service officers who do not want Government to give up their primary responsibility for maintaining law and order in the province, the Congress President conceded that for all emergent matters the Home Guard organisation would act in immediate collaboration with the local police organisation and also in case of acute emergency the captains of the Home Guard organisation would be expected to assist and help the local police organisation and yet, Sir, although so much was conceded nothing was heard of the organisation after months had elapsed. I would like to know why this scheme has not been given effect to and who stands in the way, and we propose to go to vote on this, because we feel that the Hon'ble Minister has not kept this House properly informed of the exact position in this respect.

Dr. SARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this in order to raise a discussion on the responsibility in the matter of control of prices of foodstuffs and other essentials and in the matter of abnormal rise in their prices and the failure of the Government in checking corruption and profiteering in the matter of supply.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, পরিষদের বর্ত্তমান অধিবেশনে প্রায় প্রতিদিনই সকল আলোচনার ভিতর খাদ্য-সমস্যা ও তাহার প্রতীকার সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা হইতেছে। ইহা হইতে স্পষ্টই অনুমান করা যায় যে একমাত্র এই সমস্যাই ক্রমশঃ এমন কঠিনতর অবস্থায় উপনীত হইয়াছে যে প্রত্যেক মানুষ অন্য কথা ভাবিতে পারিতেছে না। ভাবিতে গেলেও বুভুক্ষার নগ্নমূর্ত্তি স্বতঃই সজীব ও সক্রিয় হইয়া মানুষকে বিভ্রান্ত করিয়া দেয়। প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে আমরা এখানে যে কথাই বলি ও যে ভাবে আলোচনা করি, পরিষদের বাহিরে প্রত্যেক জনসাধারণ, কি ধনী, কি মধ্যবিত্ত, কি দরিদ্র, সকলেই এই সমস্যার গুরুতর চাপে নিষ্পেষিত হইয়া সকল সময়ে অন্তরে ও বাহিরে নিপীড়িত হইতেছে। তাই বর্ত্তমান সময়ে, আকাশে, বাতাসে, নগরে, অরণ্যে, জলে, স্থলে, একই মর্ম্মন্তুদ বেদনার প্রতিধ্বনি—"মৈ ভুখাহু, মৈ ভুখাহু, মৈ ভুখাহু।" ইহার প্রতিকার ও দায়িত্ব কি গভর্ণমেণ্ট এবং তৎপ্রতিনিধি মন্ত্রী মহোদয়দের উপর ন্যস্ত নয়? গত দুই বৎসর হইতে ধীরে ধীরে এই উৎকট ব্যাধি কত বিভিন্ন ও বীভৎসরূপে যে আমাদের সম্মুখে উপস্থিত হইয়াছে, তাহা ভাষায় ব্যক্ত করা যায় না। গত চৈত্র-বৈশাখ মাসে যখন ধান্যের দর পূর্ব্বাপেক্ষা কিছু বৃদ্ধি পাইল এবং গুজব উঠিল যে গভর্ণমেণ্ট সকলের সঞ্চিত ধান্য লইয়া যাইবে এবং প্রত্যেকের গোলাবাড়ীতে তালা বন্ধ করিয়া দিবে অধিকাংশ লোক তাড়াতাড়ি তাহাদের যাহা কিছু সঞ্চিত ধান্য ছিল, কলের মালিকদের নিকট বিক্রয় করিতে আরম্ভ

করে। আমার একজন বিশিষ্ট বন্ধু একটী চাল কলের মালিক সে সময় বলিয়াছিলেন যে সে সময় এত বেশী পরিমাণে তাহারা ধান কিনিয়াছিলেন যে কোনও বৎসর কোনও সময়ে সেরূপ হয় না। চির অভাবগ্রস্থ জনসাধারণ বিক্রয়লব্ধ অর্থে অন্যান্য জরুরি অভাব মোচন করিয়া রিক্ত হস্তে অপেক্ষা করিয়া রহিল। গভর্ণমেণ্ট সেই সময় এইরূপ অসমীচিনভাবে ধান্য বিক্রয় বন্ধ করিতে কোনও প্রচেষ্টা করেন নাই। বরং সে সময় গভর্ণমেণ্টের অনুগৃহীত ও তকমাপ্রাপ্ত ঠিকাদারগণ চতুর্গুণ উৎসাহে সর্ব্বত্র ধান্য ও চাউল ক্রয় করিতে আরম্ভ করিল। মূল্য সম্বন্ধে তাহারা মুক্ত হস্তে প্রত্যেককে অতিরিক্ত দর দিয়া প্ররোচিত করিতে লাগিল। এই সময়ই জানা যায় United Trading Corporation নামে এক কোম্পানী ১১৲ দরে চিনি ভারতীয় কল হইতে কিনিয়া ইরাকে ৩৭৲ দরে বিক্রয় করিতেছিল। করাচী বন্দর হইতে রাশি রাশি গম ইরাকে ও ইরাণে রপ্তানি হইতেছিল। তখনও গভর্ণমেণ্ট শান্তভাবে এই সমস্ত ব্যাপার ঘটিতে দেখিয়াও কোনও কথা বলিলেন না। ফলে যাহা ঘটিল তাহা আর বর্ণনা করিবার প্রয়োজন নাই। ধান্যের দর ক্রমশঃ ৯৷১০৲ পর্য্যন্ত উঠিল। এই সময় চারিদিকে ধান-চাউলের অভাব ও দুর্ম্মূল্যতা বৃদ্ধি পাইল, গভর্ণমেণ্ট তাহার Controlling Department কার্য্যকরী করিবার চেষ্টা করিলেন। সকলে মনে আশা পাইলাম, এইবার হয়ত আমাদের অভাব পূরণ হইবে। একদিন জেলা কর্ত্তৃপক্ষ মিলের মালিকদের উপর notice জারি করিলেন যে কেহ যেন তাহাদের কল হইতে বিভিন্ন প্রদেশে চাউল বা ধান্য না পাঠান। তাহার ২৷৪ দিন পরে আর এক notice জারি হইল যে জেলা কর্ত্তৃপক্ষের বিনা অনুমতিতে কেহ কোন চাউল পাঠাইতে পারিবে না। ইহার ফলে মিলমালিকগণ পরদিন হইতে দলে দলে জেলার মালিক District Magistrate ও S. D. O. বাহাদুরের নিকট স্বয়ং বা উকিল মারফৎ উপস্থিত হইয়া তাহাদের অসুবিধার কথা বর্ণনা করিয়া বিশেষ অনুমতি প্রার্থনা করিলেন। ইহার ফলে প্রত্যেকেই ৫, ১০, ২০, হাজার মণ চাউল রপ্তানির জন্য বিশেষ অনুমতি লাভ করিলেন কিন্তু বিনামূল্যে নহে। অর্থাৎ প্রত্যেকের নিকট অনুমতির মূল্যস্বরূপ যুদ্ধ ভাণ্ডারে সাহায্যের দাবী করা হইল। এবং প্রত্যেকেই লাভের কথা হিসাব করিয়া ২০০৲ শত হইতে ২৷৩ হাজার পর্য্যন্ত দক্ষিণা দিয়া চাউল বা ধান্য বিদেশে রপ্তানি করিতে লাগিলেন। আমি তাহাদের অনেকের নিকট শুনিয়াছি, এই প্রকাশ্য দক্ষিণা ব্যতীত অনেক ক্ষেত্রে ব্যক্তিগত দক্ষিণাও তাহাদের দিতে হইয়াছে। ইহার পরিমাণ অবশ্য স্থান ও পাত্রভেদে তারতম্য হইয়াছে। এই সময়, চাউল, চিনি ও কেরোসিন তৈল লইয়াই মারামারি চলিতেছে, অন্যদিকে সাধারণের দৃষ্টি ছিল না। জনসাধারণের ভিতর যখন এই অভাব বিশেষভাবে তীব্র হইয়া উঠিল, জেলা এবং মহকুমার গভর্ণমেণ্ট কোথায়ও Municipality কোথায়ও বা Union Boardএর সাহায্যে কতকগুলি দোকান খুলিয়া Controlled দরে তেল, চিনি ও চাউল বিক্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা করিলেন এবং এইজন্য Ration Card issue করা হইয়াছিল। এই ব্যবস্থার ফলে কিছু পরিমাণ লোক উপকৃত হইলেও শতকরা ৯০ জন পল্লী-বাসীর অবস্থার কোন পরিবর্ত্তন হইল না। স্থানীয় অপেক্ষাকৃত স্বচ্ছল অবস্থার ব্যক্তিগণ বেশী মূল্যে চাউল, চিনি, কেরোসিন তৈল কিনিয়া ভাণ্ডারজাত করিতে লাগিলেন এবং চতুর ব্যবসায়ি-গণ তাহাদের গুদামজাত মালগুলি সযত্নে রক্ষা করিয়া অতিরিক্ত মূল্যে গোপনে বিক্রয় করিতে লাগিলেন। গভর্ণমেণ্ট বলিলেন, এইভাবে গোপনে বিক্রয়ের সংবাদ প্রমাণসহ দিলে আইন-অনুসারে দণ্ড দিবেন। স্থানে স্থানে এরূপ ২৷৪টী ধরপাকড় ও শাস্তি হইলেও এই Black marketing অর্থাৎ চোরা বাণিজ্যের কোন পরিবর্ত্তন হইল না। ফলে ভাগ্যবান কৌশলী

ব্যবসায়িগণের ভাগ্যলক্ষ্মী দিন দিন প্রসন্না হইতে লাগিলেন এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিযুক্ত ঠিকাদার-গণও প্রভূত পরিমাণ ধান, চাউল কিনিয়া যথাস্থানে সরবরাহ করিতে লাগিলেন এবং সাথে সাথে অর্থশালীও হইতে লাগিলেন। গ্রাম্য ছোট ছোট দোকানদারগণ নিকটস্থ গঞ্জ হইতে খাদ্যদ্রব্য অতিরিক্ত মূল্যে কিনিয়া আরও অতিরিক্ত দরে পল্লীবাসীর ক্ষুন্নিবৃত্তি করিতে লাগিল। বড় মহাজনরা বলেন, গভর্ণমেণ্টের স্থিরীকৃত দরে মাল বিক্রয় করা অসম্ভব, কারণ তাহারাও স্বল্প মূল্যে কোথায়ও মাল পায় না। চিনির কারখানার দর বাঁধা হইলেও মাল আনিতে গেলে যে পরিমাণ বেআইনী দক্ষিণা অর্থাৎ ঘুষ দিতে হয়, তাহাতে নির্দ্দিষ্ট মূল্যে মাল বিক্রয় করিতে গেলে তাহাদের ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইতে হয়। এইরূপ বিভিন্ন স্থানে বিভিন্ন কাহিনী শুনিতে শুনিতে জনসাধারণ উত্যক্ত হইতে লাগিল। অর্থাভাব, পেটের জ্বালা, বস্ত্রাভাব, চিকিৎসাভাব, পথ্যাভাবে নিপীড়িত জনসাধারণের বক্ষে বিভীষিকাময়ী সর্ব্বনাশীর ভৈরব নৃত্য চলিতে লাগিল। গভর্ণ-মেণ্ট বিভাগের উপর নূতন বিভাগ, কমিটীর উপর নূতন কমিটী, উচ্চতর বেতনে, দেশের সকল বিষয়ে অনভিজ্ঞ হইলেও অভিজ্ঞ বলিয়া প্রশংসাপত্র দিয়া বিদেশী কর্ম্মচারী নিয়োগ করিতে লাগিলেন। উৎকট ব্যাধি কিছুমাত্র উপশমিত না হইয়া আরও উৎকট হইয়া উঠিল। ইহার ফলে বর্ত্তমানে চাউল, চিনি, ময়দা, ১৲ টাকা সেরে দাঁড়াইয়াছে। জ্বালানী কাঠ কয়লাও ইহার সাথে সাথে অতি দুর্ম্মূল্য হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। মুড়ী ও মিছরী একই দরে বিক্রীত হইতেছে। আমাদের জনসাধারণ অত্যন্ত অজ্ঞ। তাহারা সূক্ষ্ম হিসাব বুঝিতে পারে না। তাহারা চায় দুবেলা দুটি অন্ন ও ২।১ খানা মোটা কাপড়। ইহাতেই তারা সুখী হয়। কিন্তু এতটুকু সুখী বা তাদের করিবে কে? তাহারা বুঝিয়াছে যে তাদের স্বদেশবাসী মন্ত্রিগণ, যাহাদের হাতে শাসন পরিচালনের ভার ন্যস্ত আছে, দেশবাসীর অবর্ণনীয় দুঃখের কথা বুঝিলেও তাহাদের হিসাবের বৃহত্তর স্বার্থের দিকে দৃষ্টি রাখিয়া জনসাধারণের জন্য কিছুই করিবেন না, নীরবে তাহাদের মৃত্যুর দিকেই আগাইয়া দিবেন। অথবা তাহারা জনসাধারণের মতই অসহায় ও অসমর্থ। যদি এই শেষ কথাই সত্য হয়, তবে আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করি, জানিয়া শুনিয়া এই প্রতারণা কেন? প্রকাশ্যভাবে বলিয়া দিন তাহারা নিজের পথ নিজেরা দেখিয়া লউক।

আন্দোলনের ফলে Control উঠাইয়া লওয়া হইল কিন্তু ইহার ফলেও ত মূল্য কমিল না! বাড়িয়াই চলিয়াছে। নূতন সংবাদ বাহির হইতে শীঘ্র চাউল আসিতেছে। এই সংবাদ কোন নূতন Circus party আসিবার পূর্ব্বে বিজ্ঞাপনের মত সকলকে শুনান হইতেছে—এই আসিল, এই আসিল বলিয়া। কত পরিমাণে এবং কোথা হইতে আসিতেছে তাহা এখনও অপ্রকাশ্য। ইহার মধ্যে আবার কি Public interest আছে যাহার জন্য প্রকাশ করা যায় না। আমরা আমাদের অল্প বুদ্ধিতে বুঝিতে অক্ষম। তথাপি নদীবক্ষে নিমজ্জমান ব্যক্তি যেমন খড়ের কুটা ধরিয়া নিজেকে রক্ষা করিতে চায়, আমরাও তেমনি আশাতে রহিলাম।

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. K. A. HAMILTON: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, my object in moving this cut motion is to criticise the Government for their failure to deal with black markets and speculation in and hoarding of foodstuffs.

I make no apology for reverting to a subject which has already been discussed, but which we consider to be such a vital factor in the serious food situation in the province, namely, the failure of Government to deal with rice and paddy speculators.

The main obvious feature of the rice situation has been a general withholding of stocks from the market, partly by speculators and partly by cultivators themselves. Our object in moving this cut motion is to point out first, that Government have on the one hand done nothing to promote the necessary confidence amongst cultivators which might induce them to part with their stocks, and on the other hand have taken no steps to deal with speculators who, we believe, have been allowed to obtain control over a large part of the crop.

Government have admitted time and time again that the activities of speculators have had much to do with the abnormal prices prevailing in this province.

Mr. A. F. STARK: On a point of order, Sir; the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the department to which this motion relates is not present in the House. Is there any point in my honourable friend, Mr. Hamilton, moving the cut motion until the Hon'ble Minister is present here?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hamilton, you may go on. The Chief Minister is present on behalf of the Minister in charge.

(At this stage the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee entered the Chamber.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must apologise to this House, through you, for my absence so long. Being in charge of the new food portfolio I have been obsessed with many kinds of difficulties which caused some delay in my coming into the Chamber for which I apologise to my friends in the European group.

Mr. K. A. HAMILTON: The only action, however, Government have taken to deal with these speculators, apart from issuing half-hearted communiqués containing polite warnings, has been to impose embargoes against the movement of paddy and rice. In our opinion, Sir, embargoes against movement of stocks are a completely ineffective weapon against the speculator. The speculator knows and experience has proved, that he has only to hold on long enough to his stocks and Government will surrender. As a result, inside the ring of the embargo he busies himself buying up stocks and sooner or later Government are compelled to allow him to move them. The only effect of the embargo, in our opinion, is to prevent the free flow of supplies to the deficit areas and the only person who suffers from the embargo is the consumer and most certainly not the speculator.

Government's policy at the present time is, so far as we can understand it, based on the de-control of prices and also on the regulation of prices by their operations as buyer and seller. We have been treated to

statements from Government from time to time that it was their policy to build up reserves which could be thrown upon the market at times when prices rose to unwarranted heights. Now, Sir, in the first place, we are unable to understand this talk of building up reserves when Hon'ble Ministers have simultaneously made a number of conflicting statements on the subject of the degree of shortage in the province. Surely we are at present at a stage of unwarranted prices and any purchases which Government have made should be released immediately and this should have been done at least a fortnight ago. We in Calcutta are only too painfully aware of the long queues outside the pitifully small number of controlled shops—long queues, 50 per cent. of which are bound to go away unsatisfied. The first object should be to increase the number of these controlled shops and to give them regular and adequate weekly supplies. Why have Government taken no steps to do this? We ask them to declare whether they have any stocks which are not already earmarked for industrial labour and for the essential services and, if so, when they propose to release them to the public. In any event we ask the Hon'ble Minister to explain what he means by building up reserves if there is, in fact, a shortage.

Whatever be the merits or demerits of the policy of de-control which has been adopted, we have no doubt that there were cogent reasons for this course of action, although, in adopting it at a time when the price of rice in Calcutta was Rs. 24-8 per maund, Government were undoubtedly taking a very considerable risk. The attraction to the stockholder in present circumstances of releasing his stock only bit by bit, so as to take advantage of a rising market, must be very great. However that may be, we consider that the policy of de-control can only be a temporary measure of expediency and Government will sooner or later have to face up to the necessity of obtaining control over all supplies of rice.

Rationing, Sir, will have to be introduced at the earliest opportunity. I quite realise the difficulties of setting up the necessary machinery for this purpose in the province of Bengal. But in the press this morning we learn that Bombay has got so far ahead with its preparations that the rationing of food grains over there will be enforced from the middle of April. Government should have realised that in war time there are always shortages. Only last night on the wireless we learned that Australia with all its pre-war exportable surpluses was introducing the rationing of certain commodities as and from the first of next month. To do this in Bengal it will be necessary for Government to obtain the co-operation of the normal dealers in the primary and secondary markets operating through normal channels, preferably willingly, but otherwise by compulsion. They will have to obtain control over these dealers by a licensing system with drastic penalties for infringement.

Sir, in conclusion in England a profiteer is punished with a maximum penalty of 14 years' penal servitude; in Bengal he has been rewarded with progressive removal of price control, embargoes and polite warnings.

In the resulting spate of profiteering we are afraid that many persons in high places have not been free from suspicion, holding the view that Government's policy has aided and abetted profiteering and speculation, we have no option but to regard this as a fundamental issue in which, in the light of past history, we regret we can have no confidence in Government.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India", be reduced by Rs. 100.

I move this motion, Sir, with a view to raising a discussion on the civil defence arrangements for the *bustee* areas in Calcutta.

Calcutta now has efficient, well-trained and disciplined A.R.P. services which have come through their first test with flying colours. On this both Calcutta and the services themselves are to be congratulated. I must, however, sound a note of warning. The raids so far have been small affairs of only a very few machines using the lightest type of bombs. We expect heavier raids in the future by larger forces and in all probability, heavier calibre bombs will be used. If, as I hope, the civil defence services come through this more severe trial successfully, then we shall indeed have good reason to be proud. When, however, we come to the civil defence arrangements outside the A.R.P. services and, particularly, civil defence services in the *bustees*, many defects become apparent. The first important defect to which I would like to draw attention is the complexity of the arrangements, and the difficulty of finding a single authority responsible for seeing to the arrangements. Take, for example, the question of distribution of sand bags in the *bustee* areas. There are no less than three authorities concerned with this. During the monsoon last year the sand bags which had been distributed in the *bustee* areas rotted, and it became necessary that a fresh distribution should be made. The sand bags are only being redistributed now, so the *bustee* people must indeed be thankful that there have not been any serious raids. The sand and the bags are, I understand, purchased by the Commerce and Labour Department. They then pass in due course to the Public Relations Committee. The Public Relations Committee do not, I understand, distribute the bags themselves. They merely hand over the distribution to the Calcutta Corporation, Publicity Department. I confess I am astonished not that it has taken over six months to make a redistribution of sand bags in the *bustee* areas but that a distribution has been made at all. I would suggest that distribution might have been done speedily and efficiently many months before this if it had been entrusted to the A.R.P. services who have the lorries and the personnel and also the knowledge of the *bustee* areas. The present arrangement which can hardly be considered efficient should, I submit, be discontinued in favour of the method I have proposed. The same complexity of arrangements faces the citizen when questions of maintenance of tube-well and surface shelters arise. It is said

that there is a special staff employed by Government to maintain the tube-wells, but the difficulty is to find the special staff and the ordinary citizen, when he wants to get a tube-well repaired, does not know where to turn.

As regards surface shelters, Government appear to have considered that their responsibility ended with the construction of the shelters, and they have been left to be used, or rather I should say misused, by the public and particularly by Calcutta's large beggar population. The result is that the majority of them are constantly in a filthy condition. I say filthy for want of parliamentary language which would adequately describe the appalling state in which I found those shelters which I personally inspected. It is said that the Corporation have appointed special sweepers and that the cleaning is to be supervised by the A.R.P. Post Wardens, but there have been no visible signs of these arrangements which appear to remain on paper. I would suggest that an immediate enquiry into the working of this arrangement be instituted.

A second fundamental point which, I think, has been neglected and one to which experience of air-raids in Calcutta has drawn pointed attention is the question of morale amongst bustee people. A good deal as regards propaganda and education in civil defence has been done by the Public Relations Committee and by the Corporation's Publicity Department, but propaganda alone is obviously not enough. Something must be done to organise the bustee people and to enlist their active co-operation in their own civil defence arrangements. They should be actively concerned in the maintenance of their own shelters and tube-wells and they should be properly organised for shelter purposes. I suggest, Sir, that the only way to do this is to bring the leaders of the bustee people, the bustee sardars, to the A.R.P. organisations. The difficulty at present is that the ordinary A.R.P. wardens have no influence with the bustee people. They lack the standing to have this influence, and as they have to pass a literacy test they are not drawn from the bustee people themselves. What is wanted, Sir, is that the bustee sardars should be given the status of A.R.P. wardens and provided with steel helmets, badges, etc., and should be given elementary training in A.R.P. with particular reference to bustee civil defence arrangement. They will not be enrolled as ordinary sector wardens as their duties will be restricted to their own bustees. The literacy test in their case will have to be waived, but I see no objection to this as they will not have to make written reports, their only duty in this respect being perhaps to contact their sector wardens when an incident occurs. They will be responsible in their bustees for organising the bustee people for shelter purposes, for supervising the house protection fire parties and in particular keeping an eye on sand bags, for supervising the cleaning of the surface shelters and for seeing that tube-wells are kept in order. This suggestion, Sir, involves no alteration of the A.R.P. organisation laid down by the Government of India. It has already been adopted in the case of votuntary building wardens, and I see no reason why it should not be adopted in the case of bustee sardars. I suggest, moreover,

Sir, that it is the only way of securing the active co-operation of the bustee people in their own civil defence arrangements, and I suggest further that if Government can do this they will be doing something of permanent benefit to the bustees. If Government are not prepared to accept this suggestion—and it is the one, Sir, which has already been placed before the A.R.P. Controller and it should not require further examination—then I shall be glad to know what Government propose to do to remedy the present unsatisfactory arrangements with particular reference to the sand bags, tube-wells, shelters and, most important of all, morale.

Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this motion in order to raise a discussion on the inadequacy of the amount of compensation paid to the evacuees in the emergency areas and the discrimination made between individual owners or occupiers and occupiers of properties belonging to private institutions such as High English Schools and other schools.

I also beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100. I move this in order to raise a discussion on the policy in the matter of evacuation of civil population, payment of compensation to the evacuees, etc.

The evacuation of a large number of villages had taken place in the districts of Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali and several thousands of families have been rendered homeless and landless. In the Feni subdivision alone the number of evacuated villages would be about fifty. The people were not prepared to meet a situation like this. The orders of evacuation came like a bomb-shell and they did not know what to do and where to go. They had to vacate their houses and take shelter in the houses of their friends and relatives in the neighbouring villages. The congestion can better be imagined than described. It was horrible. Then again some of the villagers where these people had already taken shelter had to be evacuated and the result was that some of the evacuees had to remove twice or thrice. The civil authorities did not make any arrangement for accommodation of these people. Their duties ended with serving orders of evacuation and seeing that these orders had been carried out immediately sometimes within 24 hours. People could not carry all their things with them and they had to sell their paddy and cattle at a very low price and leave many other moveables uncared for.

It now appears that several villages remained unoccupied by the military. Their houses have been dismantled, all valuable materials including corrugated iron sheets, wooden posts, windows taken away and valuable furniture have been removed, fruit-bearing trees and trees used for the purpose of timber have all been taken away by some miscreants. After a period of 7 or 8 months they have now been released and the villagers have been asked to re-occupy.

The decision for evacuation has been taken presumably on the requisition of military officers. It appears that they have been taken not as a result of mature thinking about the extent of military requirements but so to say on mere whims of the military officers.

I do not know whether the Provincial Government and their officers have got any say in these matters or they are merely to carry out the orders of the military people. But the Provincial Government have taken up the responsibility of civil defence voluntarily in their anxiety to offer unconditional co-operation in the war efforts. By their action, lakhs of people have been rendered homeless and landless without any arrangements whatsoever for their accommodation and shelter. Evacuation has taken place in Great Britain and other countries and the Hon'ble Minister knows better what arrangements the British Government have made for evacuees of their country. But, Sir, the same value is not attached to human lives and properties in this unfortunate country. Here we are treated like so many herds of dumb driven animals. It pains me very much when we see that we are so treated by our own people.

Regarding payment of compensation, a discrimination has been made between individual owners and where the owner is an educational institution.

I shall take up one particular case for substantiating the point. The Amirabad H. E. School is situated in village Nababpur, Union No. 5, Amirabad, police-station Shonagazi, district Noakhali. In April last, the entire village of Nababpur had been evacuated. After a temporary occupation for a period of seven months, the village has been released and the villagers have been asked to re-occupy. The persons owning homestead garden and agricultural lands in the village have been allowed (1) costs of removal, (2) costs of house-construction, (3) compensation for garden and agricultural lands, and, after release, (4) costs of replacement according to a scale fixed for each of the items. Now if an individual had been the owner of the buildings and the lands, belonging to the school, he would have got not less than Rs. 20,000 by way of compensation under the different heads according to the scale fixed for the purpose. But because the owner is an educational institution it has received a nominal sum of Rs. 30 for removal cost and a lump grant of Rs. 1,000. The Secretary of the School approached the Subdivisional Officer, Feni, and he has asked him to approach higher authorities if he is not satisfied with his decision. As regards other schools some have collapsed and others have received the same treatment. High English schools of this type situated in rural areas justified their existence inasmuch as they materially contributed to the education of the poorer boys in the villages who could not get any education at all but for the existence of these schools within easy reach from their village home.

The financial condition of these institutions was already far from satisfactory on account of economic depression. They had to depend mainly on the fee income supplemented by public subscriptions from time to time. The collection of fee was always irregular and there was a

substantial accumulation of arrears every month. You can easily imagine the condition when the school was evacuated and the villages where the boys used to reside were also evacuated.

The Amirabad H. E. School was closed and after the summer holidays decided to hold the classes in a private house and a temporary shed constructed for the purpose. But the attendance was most poor and the realisation of fee was very disappointing. Now, owing to the economic disterss prevailing in the country on account of abnormally high prices of foodstuffs and other essentials, the fee collection has further deteriorated. This school, after an existence of 26 years, is now faced with a crisis threatening the very existence.

It cannot be denied that this crisis has been brought about by the evacuation and war condition. The economic loss sustained by the school should in all fairness be compensated by the Government. But the local authorities are adamant. I, therefore, appeal to the Government and the Hon'ble Minister in charge to adopt a liberal policy in the matter of awarding compensation and thus save these institutions from virtual extermination.

As regards compensation awarded on account of agricultural lands the scale of compensation on this head was fixed at a time when paddy used to sell at a price varying from 3 to 4 rupees per maund. But in Feni the price of paddy per maund now varies from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15. If the evacuee had been in occupation of an acre of paddy-growing lands he would have got paddy worth Rs. 300 to Rs. 400, but on account of deprivation of this land he would be getting a compensation of Rs. 100 only. The question now arises where would the evacuee get the money for purchasing the same amount of paddy to meet the shortage of rice for his own consumption?

As regards gardens in homestead lands the scale of compensation ought to have been fixed on the basis of present valuation, but this has not been done. Fruit-bearing trees have been cut down from the homestead lands. It takes several generations to develop a garden attached to a homestead land. At the time of awarding compensation, only the homestead lands have been taken into account, while the attached gardens have been excluded.

With these remarks, Sir, I place my motions before the House.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-15 p.m. till 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 27th March, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Saturday, the 27th March, 1943, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 208 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Prosecution of an Assistant Electrical Superintendent of Bengal-Nagpur Railway.

*227 (SHORT NOTICE). **Mr. J. C. GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state if it is a fact—

(*i*) that a prosecution was started under the Defence of India Rules against one Lt. S. N. Ray, Assistant Electrical Superintendent, Bengal-Nagpur Railway, Kharagpur, by the District Magistrate of Midnapore; and

(*ii*) that the said proceedings under Defence of India Rules have been quashed by the Hon'ble High Court?

(*b*) Has the attention of the Hon'ble Minister been drawn to the press report of the said judgment?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) I have seen press reports to this effect.

(*b*) I have seen the press report.

Increasing of family allowances granted to certain security prisoners.

*228. **Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether he is aware—

(*i*) that Sj. Narendra Nath Das and Sj. Devjiban Ghosh, security prisoners in the Dacca Jail, have big families to support;

(*ii*) that they have been granted Rs.15 per mensem only;

(*iii*) that the allowance is not adequate for the maintenance of their families;

(*iv*) that Sj. Narendra Nath Das was granted a higher rate of allowance some five years back when he was a detenu; and

(*v*) that his father is a retired man without any pension?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of enhancing the rate of allowance granted to the said security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) The family of security prisoner Babu Narendra Nath Das consists of eight members excluding him. There is no security prisoner named Devjiban Ghosh but there is one Deb Kumar Ghosh by name and his family consists of 12 members excluding him.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) No.

(*iv*) While a detenu he was granted, at first, a family allowance of Rs.10 per mensem and subsequently it was enhanced to Rs.20 per mensem.

(*v*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

Medical treatment of a security prisoner.

***229. Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware—

(*i*) that Maulvi Abdus Sattar, B.L., pleader of Burdwan, was arrested as a security prisoner immediately after his release at the gate of Alipore Central Jail;

(*ii*) that symptoms of gout developed in him a few days before his release;

(*iii*) that the disease is going from bad to worse day by day;

(*iv*) that Maulvi Abdus Sattar has been bed-ridden for the last two months in the Jail Hospital; and

(*v*) that the Medical Officer has recommended his case to be treated in the Calcutta Medical College Hospitals?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*v*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what arrangement, if any, has been made for the treatment of Maulvi Abdus Sattar in the Medical College Hospitals?

(*c*) If no arrangement has been made, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of releasing him on medical grounds?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) He was arrested under the Defence of India Rule 129 on the expiry of his sentence and subsequently made a security prisoner.

(*ii*) Poliarthritis (rheumatic) developed in him.

(*iii*) No.

(*iv*) He is in the Jail Hospital from the 17th December, 1942.

(*v*) Yes, for Infra-Red treatment in the X'ray Department.

(*b*) He was sent to the Medical College Hospitals for treatment on the 26th February, 1943, and report regarding his case from Medical College Hospitals is awaited.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the present state of health of Maulvi Abdus Sattar? Today is the 27th of March and on the 26th February he was sent to the Medical College Hospitals. I want to know whether he is dead or alive.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He is not dead, and about the present state of his health I will get a report.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who are the doctors under whose treatment he has been placed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that no proper arrangement is being made for his treatment by eminent physicians and surgeons and for his proper nursing and food?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not that I know of, but I shall certainly enquire into the matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken after the question was sent to ascertain the facts in detail and before the answer was sent to the Assembly Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The report does not contain details on these particular points, but since my honourable friend mentions so many things which are of a serious character, I propose to look into all those things.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if his attention has been drawn to question (*c*) where it is specially asked, "If no arrangement has been made, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of releasing him on medical grounds?" and will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is considering the desirability of releasing this prisoner on medical grounds?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will consider it.

Staff of the Tangail police-station.

***230. Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMOOD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, and constables of Tangail police-station against whom actions have been taken or are being taken, reports have been submitted to higher officers or who have been transferred since the posting of the present Circle Inspector of Police at Tangail;

(*ii*) the number of persons referred to in (*a*) (*i*) that are (1) Muslims and (2) Non-Muslims;

(*iii*) the number of police officers posted in the Tangail police-station; and

(*iv*) the number of them that are Muslims?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any Muslim Sub-Inspector of Police has been recently transferred by telegram within a month of his joining his post at Tangail?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Two Sub-Inspectors, 1 officiating Sub-Inspector, 1 Assistant Sub-Inspector, 2 Head Constables, 1 constable.

(*a*) (*ii*) (1) Three and (2) four.

(*iii*) Five Sub-Inspectors and four Assistant Sub-Inspectors.

(*iv*) No Muslim Sub-Inspector. Two Muslim Assistant Sub-Inspectors.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) One probationary Muslim Sub-Inspector transferred under order of the Superintendent of Police for disciplinary reasons.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House who is the Superintendent of Police of Mymensingh and who is the Subdivisional Police Officer of Tangail? Are they Indians or Europeans.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer offhand. I want notice.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) (2), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that actions have been taken against the non-Muslims only very recently?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Muslim clerical appointments in the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Intelligence Branch.

***231. Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of clerical appointments in the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Intelligence Branch; and

(*ii*) the number of such posts held by Muslims?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for not observing the Communal Ratio Rules in that office?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) 84.

(*ii*) 9.

(*b*) The Communal Ratio Rules are observed in filling vacancies to the temporary establishment. In regard to the filling of permanent vacancies—the matter is under correspondence with Government.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain, with reference to answer (*b*), what does he mean by the word "Government" here?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The department of the Government.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that when a permanent vacancy is filled up by departmental promotion, a vacancy occurs in the lowest grade?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, occasionally that is so.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: If that is the case——.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is not always the case, sometimes it is so.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Why not always? When a permanent vacancy is filled up by promotion, a vacancy must occur in the lowest grade. So, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of filling up by a Muslim the vacancy which occurs in the lowest grade as a result of promotion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not fill up these vacancies; they are filled up by departmental officers, but they are given instructions to conform to the communal ratio rules when making these appointments.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain who is carrying on this correspondence with Government for the filling up of permanent vacancies?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The department.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Which department?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know. The point is this: in consequence of the fact that the figures reveal a disproportionate number of Muslims, correspondence is going on between the Home Department and the head of the department.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any machinery to observe whether the communal ratio is being maintained by the officers making the appointments?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: They are asked to observe the rules. If they do not, then explanation is called for from them and if in any case appointments are made in violation of the rules, those appointments are liable to be set aside under rule 13.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the reason for differentiating between temporary appointments where communal ratio rules are observed and permanent appointments where these rules are not observed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The whole point is that if investigation reveals the fact that the communal ratio rules were not being observed so far as temporary appointments are concerned, I will look into the matter and see that the communal ratio rules are strictly applied to all cases.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the claims of the Muslims in the Intelligence Branch is brushed aside?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is too vague a question to be answered.

Theft, dacoity and murder cases in Gopalpur and Tangail Circles.

***232. Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN (Mymensingh):** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of—

(1) theft,

(2) dacoity, and

(3) murder,

cases for the last three months committed in the—

(1) Gopalpur Circle, and

(2) Tangail Circle,

of the subdivision of Tangail;

(*ii*) whether the number of criminal cases is on the increase?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reason thereof;

(*ii*) what steps do the Government propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) The figures are as follows:—

	Tangail Circle.	Gopalpur Circle.
(1) Theft	... 17	23
(2) Dacoity	... 17	7
(3) Murder	... 8	2

(*ii*) Yes—especially crime against property.

(*b*) (*i*) The cause is mainly economic and is due to the high prices and the uneven distribution or shortage of essential foodstuffs.

(*ii*) I refer the honourable member so far as the economic aspect is concerned to the recent debate on food supplies during which statements of Government's policy and intentions were made to the House.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that bribery and jobbery have played their part in Tangail circle owing to increase in dacoities?

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you mean to say that these thefts and dacoities have increased bribery and jobbery?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is more than I can say.

Procession with music before mosque in Kishoreganj.

*233. **Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that Babu Kshitish Chandra Burman, B.C.S., Deputy Magistrate, expressed unqualified and unconditional regret for his unintentional act of playing music before the Shaheedy Mosque at Puranthana, Kishoreganj, in October, 1941, and solemnly agreed not to play music before this mosque in future before Mr. S. Sen, I.C.S., the then Subdivisional Officer, Kishoreganj, Mr. Sadullah, I.P., the then Subdivisional Police Officer, Kishoreganj, Maulvi Muhammad Israil, M.L.A., and Khan Sahib Abdul Wadud Choudhury; and

(*ii*) that the said Deputy Magistrate addressed a few letters to Khan Sahib Saadat Hossain Chowdhury, Subdivisional Officer, Kishoreganj, in October, 1942, in connection with the taking out of his immersion procession on the 19th October, 1942?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table copies of those letters?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Although there was no opposition to the procession when it passed the mosque with music in 1941, certain Moslem gentlemen represented that the incident had caused some misgiving in their community. At a meeting at which the gentlemen mentioned by the honourable member were present Mr. Burman expressed his regret at having taken the procession past the mosque the existence of which was unknown to him. The officers present at the meeting do not recall any specific promise on the part of Mr. Burman that he would never again take a similar procession past the mosque, but they agree that the general impression which he gave them was that he would not do so.

(*ii*) and (*b*) I have laid on the Library Table a copy of Mr. Burman's letter of the 18th October, 1942. I have not received from the District Magistrate a copy of any other letter from Mr. Burman, and I gather that it is the only one from him in this matter.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that Mr. Barman on behalf of the Hindu community and some representatives of the Muslim community were present at the time when the agreement was arrived at in the presence of the Subdivisional Officer and the Subdivisional Police Officer that in future no processions with music will pass by the mosque?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: When I went to Kishoreganj it was represented to me that there was such a written agreement, but I could not get any. A letter was written by Mr. Barman this year revealing the fact that last year a procession was taken outside prayer hours by the mosque and even for that Mr. Barman had to apologise. Therefore, the conclusion was that they had agreed that at no time whatsoever, whether at the prayer time or not, no procession with music was allowed to pass by that mosque.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In view of the statement just now made by the Chief Minister that Government officials came to the conclusion that such a verbal agreement was given by Mr. Barman why did the authorities allow the passing of a procession with music by that mosque in 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: My friend is well aware of the fact that at first the Subdivisional Officer allowed the procession with music outside prayer hours but then it was represented to him that in the previous year there was an agreement that a procession would not pass with music at any time and on consideration of this fact and also of other facts the Subdivisional Officer revoked the previous order and passed a fresh order prohibiting the procession with music at any time. Upon that order there was a representation to the District Magistrate by the Hindu M.L.A. and the leaders of the Hindu community and the District Magistrate ultimately sent a wire to the Subdivisional Officer sticking to his previous order and allowing the procession to pass by the mosque.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Hon'ble Minister proposes to take against the District Magistrate for passing orders in contravention of the instructions laid down by Government in this connection?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I must have notice so that when I know the facts I may come to a decision.

It appeared, however, on enquiry that the District Magistrate was at Mymensingh at about 9 or 9-30 p.m. when he received the telegram of the Subdivisional Officer. His statement is that he thought that at that time it was not necessary to pass any order because by that time the procession must have passed by the mosque. When he passed the first order asking the Subdivisional Officer to stick to the previous order he consulted the Superintendent of Police and they were both of opinion that it was not necessary to change the order that had already been passed.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, by way of throwing further light on the question asked by Sir Nazimuddin, if it is a fact that he is convinced that the District Magistrate did actually contravene the instructions issued by Government or if it is a fact that the District Magistrate concerned merely agreed with or approved of the action recomendmed by the local police and the local officials of the subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I went very thoroughly into the matter and having regard to all facts and circumstances I feel convinced that the District Magistrate did not act *mala fide* but acted *bona fide*—it might be, under a misapprehension or a mistake or he might have been more well advised to have looked into the matter more closely. He, however, consulted the Superintendent of Police and both of them were of opinion that the telegram sent by the District Magistrate should be adhered to. I feel that so far as facts are concerned no dishonest motive can be imputed to the District Magistrate.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the second wire of the District Magistrate to the Subdivisional Officer was that even after he had met the representation pointing out the existence of the letters and the agreement, he insisted on allowing a procession with music before the mosque?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have already said that the District Magistrate had received the wire of the Subdivisional Officer. As a matter of fact, the District Magistrate had before him the wire of the Subdivisional Officer and the telegram of the M.L.A.'s and Hindu leaders. They were all before him and he discussed the matter with the Superintendent of Police and sent the telegram.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the District Magistrate had not even the courtesy to reply to the joint representation of the M.L.A's.?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a matter of opinion.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of taking steps with a view to reversing the effect of the order passed by the District Magistrate so that the agreement between the two communities already arrived at is not violated in future?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a request for action.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Does the Hon'ble Minister consider it desirable to reverse the effect of the action of the order passed by the District Magistrate or to take steps so that the agreement between the communities arrived at before is not violated in future?

Mr. SPEAKER: Your question simply is this: does the Hon'ble Minister in charge consider it desirable to see that in future the agreement is given effect to.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Yes, Sir.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. In reply to a question asked by Mr. Mahmood the Hon'ble Minister already said that he is not aware of the actual existence of this so-called agreement although Mr. Mahmood specifically asked if in the presence of Mr. Burman, the former Subdivisional Officer, a sort of agreement was drawn up between certain members of the Hindu community and certain members of the Muslim community. On the face of this complete denial of the existence of a so-called agreement, how does this question of action arise regarding giving effect to that agreement which the Chief Minister has said does not exist?

Mr. SPEAKER: Quite so. I allowed the Chief Minister to say many things because this is a question which arouses feeling. I wanted that I should not be a party to a thing which may further confuse the matter. But so far as I see from the answer, there is no mention whatsoever of any agreement. There is nothing to show that any actual agreement was entered into between the parties. All that is stated here is that there was an impression. The officers present at the meeting did not recall any specific promise on the part of Mr. Burman that he would never again take a similar procession past the mosque, but they agreed that the general impression which he gave them was that he would not do so. Therefore there is no question of specific agreement between the parties. Therefore, I think that question strictly does not arise.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Hindus used to take out processions as a customary right along that road in previous years, and that it was only in 1941 that objection was taken by Maulvi Muhammad Israil on the day after the immersion ceremony took place?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is too long a question.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: My question is this: was it a customary right for Hindus to take out processions along that public way in previous years? Was it a fact that it was only in 1941 after the Desserah procession had passed off, Maulvi Muhammad Israil was the gentleman who first objected that Muslims' prayer would be disturbed?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Lahiri, have you seen the answer? The answer is clear: "At a meeting at which the gentlemen mentioned by the honourable member were present Mr. Burman expressed his regret at having taken the procession past the mosque the existence of which was unknown to him". Therefore, no question of custom of taking processions past the mosque does arise.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the action of the District Magistrate of Mymensingh did contravene any rule regarding the conduct of District Magistrates?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is no hard and fast rule laid down for the conduct of District Magistrates. They are expected as

responsible public servants to be able to exercise their judgment and discretion in these matters. There is no rule of conduct.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the various directions given by Government by the 1926 circular and subsequent circulars as to the manner in which these processions are to be permitted?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, I am fully aware. The rule as summarised by Government is this: there shall be no music unless the custom is proved or unless there is an agreement.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In view of the fact that the Hon'ble Minister has no clear knowledge as to whether there is an agreement about the question of music before mosque, will he consider the desirability of convening a conference of representatives of Hindus and Muslims of Kishoreganj and decide as to whether music before mosque should be banned altogether or should be allowed outside prayer hours?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As far as I am aware so far as the Hindus and Muslims are concerned they have now come to some kind of agreement and the Commissioner of the Division has recommended that in future processions past that mosque shall not go with music.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Government circular of 1926 as well as the subsequent circulars mentioned by Sir Nazimuddin state that music before mosque may not be allowed if——.

Mr. SPEAKER. Dr. Sanyal, you are going into the contents of the circulars. I do not allow it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I want to ask one question about it. Whether according to those circulars music is to be stopped at all hours or at prayer hours only?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already said I cannot allow it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have not put my question. My question is this: whether Government circulars enjoin that music must be stopped at all hours or only at stated hours of prayer?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have disallowed the question.

(Maulvi Muhammad Israil rose to put supplementary.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I am on my legs.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: It is Mr. Israil's question and he should be allowed to put supplementaries.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. We are perhaps going to repeat something of the nature which happened in Kishoreganj. Do you desire that in this House? I hope no one desires that. Dr. Sanyal, I am replying to you. You wanted to know the contents of some circulars.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir. The circulars have been mentioned and certain points have been raised. I want to clarify so that no misunderstanding can arise.

Mr. SPEAKER: The circulars are there. I will not allow any more question on the circulars.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: They are confidential circulars.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Huq, are they confidential circulars?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, not confidential. I was not giving the contents but the substance of the circulars. but if the contents are to be discussed I must have notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a personal explanation, Sir. I do not like to create heat or feeling. All that I wanted was that there should be no misunderstanding due to only a small extract of the circular or circulars being placed, the more vital extract being whether music should be allowed at all hours or only at stated hours.

Mr. SPEAKER: The circulars are not confidential documents. If that is so, you can call for the circulars from the Hon'ble Minister in charge.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I rise by way of personal explanation. My name has been brought in the supplementary question by Mr. Ashutosh Lahiri. I want to put some supplementary questions to clear that position.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot go on like that. The names of so many gentlemen have been mentioned in the question itself.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: No, Sir. Mr. Lahiri stated that only in the year 1941——

Mr. SPEAKER: Your name is in the question itself. Maulvi Muhammad Israil is the gentleman, an honourable member of this House, who has put this question, and in the question itself his name appears like this "Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Babu Kshitish Chandra Barman, B.C.S., Deputy Magistrate, expressed unqualified and unconditional regret for his unintentional act of playing music before the Shaheedy Mosque at Puranthana, Kishoreganj, in October, 1941, and solemnly agreed not to play music before this mosque in future before Mr. S. Sen, I.C.S., the then Subdivisional Officer, Kishoreganj, Mr. Sadullah, I.P., the then Subdivisional Police Officer, Kishoreganj, Maulvi Muhammad Israil, M.L.A., and Khan Sahib Abdul Wadud Choudhury." Your name was already there. Therefore, no question of mentioning your name in the supplementary question does arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, may I be permitted to put only one supplementary question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that——

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: On a point of order, Sir. If my honourable friend is permitted to put a supplementary question, may I also be allowed to put another question?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order at all. Mr. Israil.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that all the copies of licences of processions with music previous to 1942 were produced by the Circle Inspector of Police before the Subdivisional Officer and other gentlemen concerned, and that showed that music was invariably stopped in all processions?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say from memory what were the documents.

Relief to Burma evacuees.

*234. **Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QADIR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Home (Evacuees) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total amount allotted by Government during 1942-43 out of the grant made by the Government of India to give relief to the Burma evacuees and destitute people belonging to the Chittagong district;

(*ii*) how much of this allotment has been spent up to date and in what shape;

(*iii*) how many applications were received from such evacuees during 1942-43;

(*iv*) how many of them were enquired into;

(*v*) in how many cases the relief or advance was given;

(*vi*) how many applications were rejected after enquiry;

(*vii*) how many are still pending for enquiry;

(*viii*) how many were enquired into but payment has not yet been made; and

(*ix*) whether the allotment made by the District Magistrate for each police-station has been fully distributed?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ix*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the names of the officers entrusted with the distribution;

(*ii*) the amount allotted to them;

(*iii*) the amount distributed up to date; and

(*iv*) the balance still in hand?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The preparation of a detailed statement will be impossible without an expenditure of time and labour which will be entirely disproportionate and which I am not prepared to inflict on my officers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that great dissatisfaction exists because of the discriminatory treatment against the Indian evacuees and in favour of Anglo-Burman and other evacuees?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am aware of the fact.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action the Government of Bengal has taken to remove this drawback and to set right the discrimination that is still being pursued in the matter of relief to the evacuees from Burma as between Indians and Indians and between Indians and Anglo-Burmas?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the present question is one of discrimination, but the original question is one of details. Probably the idea was to deduce from these details the conclusion to which my friend refers. It is not my department, it does not concern me but I will look into the matter. I think the case is now much better.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the total amount allotted for the purpose and what amount has been spent?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, I cannot give details.

Realisation of audit cess by certificate procedure in Goalundo subdivision.

***235. Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that acute distress prevails in the subdivision of Goalundo due to the failure of crops;

(*ii*) that relief measures have been undertaken by the Government in the shape of—

(1) agricultural loan,

(2) gratuitous relief, and

(3) test relief; and

(*iii*) that the people are experiencing hardship by being enforced to pay audit cess which is being realised by means of certificate procedure?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the realisation of audit cess was neglected in the past and as such there have been heavy accumulations?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of writing off the dues of audit cess referred to in (*b*)?

(*d*) Are the Government also considering the desirability of withdrawing certificate cases for the present during this distress?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) (*i*) There is distress in the subdivision.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) and (*d*) Execution of all pending certificate cases (15 in number) has been kept in abeyance until the next harvest.

(*b*) Collection of audit cess was not neglected but there is also a general mentality not to pay. There has been heavy accumulation.

(*c*) The question of remission of arrear audit cess in deserving cases is under consideration.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the period of time by which is expected the completion of the consideration of passing orders in deserving cases?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No. I cannot give any definite time.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the arrear of cess includes in many cases arrear for 10 years?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I cannot say that.

Distress in Burdwan district.

***236. Maulvi ABUL HASHIM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether he has received a petition sent to him on the 16th November, 1942, on behalf of the people of Burdwan regarding the present distress prevailing in the district?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of it?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, have been taken in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) A copy is laid on the Library Table.

(*c*) The petition contains prayers which concern more than one department of Government. These have been forwarded to the departments concerned for taking necessary action. So far as Revenue Department is concerned, the following relief measures have been taken:—

		Rs.
Agricultural loans	...	90,000
Gratuitous relief	...	10,397
Grant for rebuilding of houses damaged or destroyed by flood	...	6,908

Relief measures in certain cyclone affected areas of Midnapore.

*237. **Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether the people of the cyclone and flood affected areas of Contai and Tamluk subdivisions are getting adequate supply of paddy, rice, fodder and materials (such as straw, bamboo, ropes, etc.) for construction of houses?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken by the Government in the matter?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of opening supply centres at important places of the affected areas for the supply of materials at moderate prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) It is not possible in the present state of supplies in the Province for people of the affected area to get adequate supply, but they are getting as much as the circumstances permit.

(*b*) Government have been supplying from the less affected areas of Midnapore and from other areas as much rice and paddy as they can. There is yet not much dearth of straw for cattle in areas where cattle have survived in numbers. All possible steps are being taken to help people to get their house-building materials but the supply is limited and the difficulty of transport acute.

(*c*) Yes, so far as rice for workers engaged in the test relief and embankment repairs is concerned. Supply of house-building materials at moderate prices is also being attempted.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Supply of Civil List to members of the Legislature.

71. **Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Appointment) Department be pleased to state whether members of the Legislature are at present supplied with copies of Bengal Civil List?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Do the Government contemplate to supply Bengal Civil Lists to the members of this Legislature?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*c*) No.

(*b*) The Bengal Civil List has been classified as a document for official use only for the duration of the war.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of copies that were printed previously and the number of copies that have been printed this year?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not possible for Government to supply at least one of the two half-yearly copies to the members? We had been getting both the issues before. But if it is not possible for war economic reasons to provide both the July and the January copies, will the Government consider the desirability of supplying at least one of the two?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I think it is being supplied.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, it is discontinued.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I think that can be done.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he means by "official use" and whether members of the Legislature are not part of the Government under the Government of India Act?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

Expenditure incurred for A.R.P. measures in Bengal.

72. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state the total amount of money—

(1) sanctioned and
(2) spent

for A.R.P. measures for—

(1) Calcutta,
(2) Suburbs, and
(3) mufassal

of Bengal from April up to the 31st August, 1942.

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the present conditions of slit trenches in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (1) Rs.2,69,00,000 and (2) Rs.64,31,546, for A.R.P. measures for (1) Calcutta, (2) suburbs and (3) mufassal together, as separate figures for each area are not available.

(*b*) Fairly satisfactory. Arrangements have been made to maintain the slit trenches and keep them clean though admittedly this is a matter of great difficulty.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why separate figures for Calcutta and suburbs and mufassal areas cannot be available?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer it at present. I take it as a notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether separate accounts are kept for these cases, I mean for the A.R.P. expenses for Calcutta and suburbs and mufassal areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? We have had replies from the Hon'ble Ministers concerned to a series of supplementary questions to the effect that they would ask for notice or that they would supply information later on. Under the rules it is incumbent on the honourable members putting supplementary questions to write out that notice if the Hon'ble Minister concerned wants it and the onus of sending a fresh notice devolves on the member himself. But when the Minister concerned due to his want of sufficient details in the file requires further information to be placed before the House, I would submit that either your department be asked to collect such notices and send to him straightway or the Minister himself may send some representative. Otherwise, so many things get accumulated that it is very difficult for the members to get the information.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will look into it.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what arrangements have been made to maintain the slit trenches and to keep them regularly cleaned?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say offhand. I must ask for notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Sir, Dr. Sanyal has explained the whole thing. This question was put last year before August, that is, about eight or nine months back. It is regrettable that even after nine months the Hon'ble Minister gives answers like this.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot discuss it. I quite see the force of your argument that you are aggrieved, but this is not the proper occasion to criticise the conduct of the Ministers.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any arrangements have been made for keeping the parabolic shelters clean and in proper condition? And, if so, what arrangements have been made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is a matter of detail. I cannot say offhand.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I want to know what arrangements have been made?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I will answer this question in course of my reply to the cut motion moved by my honourable friend Sir Henry Birkmyre.

Appointment of Sub-Inspectors of Police from the Chittagong Division.

73. Mr. JAGAT CHANDRA MANDAL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Appointment) Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the total number of Sub-Inspectors of Police appointed from the Chittagong Division from 1938 to 1942; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus, and

(3) Scheduled Castes?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rule has been observed with regard to those appointments?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*d*) Are the Government considering the desirability of taking steps so that the same may be followed in the case of future appointments?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) Yes, but the ratio is applied on a provincial basis.

(*c*) and (*d*) Do not arise.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of unstarred question No. 73.

Year.	Promoted from the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspectors.	Recruited from outsiders.	Total.	Muslims.	Non-Muslims other than Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Castes.
1938 ..	2	4	6	5	1	Nil
1939 ..	6	4	10	5	5	Nil
1940 ..	5	5	10	7	5	Nil
1941 ..	6	7	13	7	5	1
1942 ..	4	9	13	8	4	1

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is in a position to say if any Scheduled Caste candidates applied for appointments made during the years 1938, 1939 and 1940?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I can't say without notice. There must have been applications.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Sir, I want to know——.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister has said that he cannot say without notice.

Rai Sahib ANUKUL CHANDRA DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to say how many applications were made in 1941-42 from Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say without notice.

Application for leave of absence.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Dr. Sir Muhammad Azizul Haque, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur, representing Nadia (West) Muhammadan Constituency, to be absent for the period from the 15th September, 1942, to the end of the session for which he finds that he is unable to attend meetings of the Assembly.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Sir, I rise on a point of privilege. I have objection to this.

Sir, we draw Rs. 150 per month as emoluments and not as pension. Sir Azizul Haque has got a permanent salaried job in London in the continent of Europe——

Mr. SPEAKER: You are opposing this?

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you want to deliver a speech opposing this motion?

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But up till now there has been no such precedent. Still I think that if you have got objection, you can ventilate it.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Sir, he has got a salaried job in London in the continent of Europe—he is not even in our continent, he is in a different continent altogether. This money is quite unearned money and how can he expect it? How can we allow it? No man of conscience can claim such money and I think it is a clear case of cheating.

Mr. SPEAKER: Don't use the word "cheating".

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: The gentleman who has tabled the motion is also guilty of abetment. I should say no laws allow it—neither the British law nor the Muslim law allows it. I think it is *haram* to take such money. So, I seriously object to it. Sir, I would request that you would be good enough to thrash out the matter in the Committee of Privileges.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a different matter.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, with your permission I should like to ventilate my point of view. I know that a law has been passed allowing Government servants to take part in the proceedings of Legislatures, but the intention primarily was to assist army officers when they were in different parts of England and Scotland to be able to go and take part in the debates of the House of Commons in London. But here this is a case in which our honourable colleague is perhaps drawing the salary from the Assembly. The Hon'ble Home Minister may be able to tell us whether he is doing it or not. It may be legally correct, but I doubt if it is fair to take shelter under this law. A man in London cannot even come back to India unless and until facilities are provided for him by the military. He has crossed two oceans and a distance of about 6,000 miles. He has come here officially and he is a guest of His Excellency the Governor-General. He may come and sit here for a minute just to satisfy the legal necessity and then go out.

Sir, our friend the Coal Stowing Officer is also taking advantage of this position, but I have no objection to it in any event because being in Calcutta he is able to come and help us in our deliberations. But in the case of the other honourable member who is a very respected person and a friend of mine, I feel that he should either retain his job in London or give it up, come back and sit amongst us—he may get a High Court chair perhaps—but that requires his decision primarily.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: I should like to know, Sir, whether a person holding an office of profit under the Crown can at the same time continue to be a member of this House for such a long time and draw salaries from both the places.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as the present motion is concerned, we are not here to decide whether he is eligible to be a member of this House or not; but the question is whether he should be allowed leave of absence so that he may continue to be a member of this House. It is open to the House not to grant him the necessary permission to be absent and it is also open to the House to grant him the leave of absence for which a motion is now before the House. But when an objection has now been raised to granting him leave of absence, the only course open to me is that I should put the motion to vote.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, it is the parliamentary convention that if a motion of leave of absence is placed before the House, it is granted as a matter of course; and therefore I did not expect that objection would be raised. But when an objection has been raised on fundamental grounds I may tell you, Sir, that as High Commissioner Sir Azizul Haque has been allowed to retain his seat in this House so long. The point has been very lucidly dealt with by Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi and it is not for me to go further into the same subject. I would therefore ask you, Sir, to hold this question in abeyance till the next day or some other day so that there may be a unanimous agreement arrived at in the meantime on this question.

I would neither like to withdraw the motion nor to press it to vote today, for in that case we would be setting up an unwholesome precedent and before we set up such a precedent we must consider the question from all points of view.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you ask for withdrawal of the motion?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, Sir, I ask for your kind consent to keep it in abeyance.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the position is this: the matter is now before the House and if the House desires that it should be held over, certainly it can be held over.

I should like to know from the House whether it is generally agreed that this matter should stand over till the next working day.

(No objection was raised from any side of the House.)

The question is held over till the next working day.

Point of Privilege.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I rise to a question of privilege, Sir? On the 23rd March, I drew the attention of the Hon'ble the Chief and the Home Minister and of this House to the fact that Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, Whip of the Congress Parliamentary Party of Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, was lying seriously ill at Berhampore and has been removed to the Hospital. I was assured that telegraphic instructions would be issued by Government for his proper treatment. But today is the 27th, Sir, and I do not know whether Government have got any reply, and also whether any telegram was sent at all. I have got information that no telegram has been sent so far although the Chief Minister assured me that he will instruct his office to that effect. The condition of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal has grown worse and I would like to know what the Government propose to do now. I hope Government will make an early announcement on this matter; otherwise, I should like to move a privilege motion. His condition is at present causing grave anxiety and I believe Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu has received a communication and is in a position to enlighten us about the present condition of his health.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: You know quite well that I cannot do anything.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I gave the necessary orders but looking into the papers I find that somehow or other the Government order was delayed for two days by office. Then a telegraphic message was sent but I do not know what has happened. But if the facts are as has been stated by my friend, Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, arrangements will be made to bring down Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal to Calcutta.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will you allow me to go personally to Berhampore immediately to see the patient and obtain firsthand knowledge as to what is the present state of his health so that I can report the matter on Monday?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, I shall certainly allow him to do that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you, Sir.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

63—Extraordinary charges in India.

[The debate on the motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu for grant under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" was then resumed.]

Mrs. NELLIE SEN-GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw your attention and the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to the deplorable state of the evacuees from Burma. I am particularly interested in Chittagong. At present there is no adequate arrangement for quick disposal of applications of these evacuees. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you will be surprised to hear that in Chittagong there are almost 40,000 applications pending in the office of the Special Officer and unattended to. People who have sent applications six months ago are still waiting for replies. There is a general and genuine grievance against the present Special Officer in charge of these things in Calcutta. Applicants do not meet with the same courtesy, kindness and quick attendance that they used to get from the former officer and his assistant in charge. Applicants are driven out without any reply to their questions, and I am sorry to say that it is only those people who have had lucrative business or property in Burma and money and who can institute an agitation or start agitation get a hearing. Sir, this is a very sad state of affairs and I hope that something will be done in this matter immediately. Would it not be desirable to put some of these evacuees in the office of Evacuation? These men can have sympathy with their fellow sufferers and they also may know the condition of the families of the evacuees in Burma in dealing with these matters.

Another thing that I would state is that unemployment of these people is a very great problem and surely some of them might be suitably employed. There is another matter also. Many of these people from Burma have been away from Chittagong for years, their homesteads, their dwellings, if they exist at all, are absolutely unfit for habitation today. Would it not be possible for Government to advance building loans to these people so that they might build or repair houses for their accommodation. Sir, rains are coming soon, and rains in Chittagong are by no means light. We all know that Chittagong has gone through very bad times. There has been bombing in that area and I do hope that something will be done to relieve the terrible conditions of these evacuees from Burma.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, I, on behalf of the Muslim League Party, would like to support Mrs. Sen-Gupta's appeal to the Government to consider the condition of Indians who are evacuees, as well as those who are in the occupied zones. This may be the province and the responsibility of His Majesty's Government or of the Government of India, but the most proximate responsibility also falls on this Government. We would respectfully urge this Government to use all its influence and place all its resources at the disposal of these unfortunate people of Chittagong as well as of those in the occupied zones.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Mr. Speaker, may I rise, Sir, to give expression to my deep feelings of indignation at the bungling up of Civil Defence administration—the administration responsible for the lives of millions of our countrymen?

The injustices and oppressions committed in the A.R.P. and Civil Defence services exceeded all limits of our patience. The Muslims of Bengal and the Scheduled Caste communities in their dismay sent a memorial to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal through the Council of Action formed to deal with this most vital matter concerning our interests. The memorial was also released to the press by Mr. Nurul Huda, Secretary of the Council of Action, but the Government of Bengal or its blessed department of Publicity did never dare contradict any of its allegations all of which are most serious charges levelled against the department. May I also recall the memorable speech delivered by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy in the Assembly last session when this Government most shamelessly had to admit that the ratio of the Mussalmans is very insignificant in these departments? From this it is now evident that this Government is deliberately depriving the Mussalmans and also the Scheduled Castes of their legitimate share. Crores of rupees are spent in these departments without any definite programme of scheme. Favouritism is shown very liberally in these departments. Merit and academic qualifications are mercilessly ignored.

In Calcutta under the Deputy Controller there are as many as 6 responsible posts and Khan Bahadur Samsuddoha, Commander, House Protection Fire Service, was the only Mussalman who had the privilege of occupying one of these posts. This Muslim gentleman established his reputation as a member of the Imperial Police Service and also in this department he discharged his responsibility with credit. Far from appreciating his meritorious services so long rendered he has been removed from the post for the reasons best known to the Ministry. This gentleman did his level best to maintain communal ratio in matter of appointments. Was it a crime in the eyes of this Ministry at whose hands Muslim interests have been so long jeopardised and so the severest penalty has been awarded to this Muslim officer?

Post Raid Information Service is a newly created department precisely known as Civil Defence Information Department. This department in my opinion is absolutely useless and Government has no justification whatsoever in spending public money for this sort of department. In co-operation with the local police, A.R.P. and Civic Guard organisations could do the same

work in addition to their duties for which this new department is established. Moreover this sort of department if at all required the public co-operation and confidence is most essential for a smooth work. But, alas, the Calcutta public has lost all its confidence in this department for its different activities since its inception.

A Government permanent official is in charge of this department. This gentleman has already gained bad reputation wherever he has worked and hence he should not have been given charge of such important department. While he was posted in Brahmanbaria a case was filed against him in the court of the Additional District Magistrate, Tippera. One Shahjehan, son of Maulvi Ali Ahmad Khan of Brahmanbaria, was the complainant of this case. Many filthy things came out in connection with this case though the case was later on compromised.

Serious charges are being made against the authority of this department mainly against the Officer-in-charge and the Deputy Officer-in-charge of administration.

All the posts, namely, Administrative Officer, Sub-Area Supervisors, Lady Information Officers, Clerks and even the post of cycle messengers were advertised duly in the local newspapers—excepting of course Muslim papers —mentioning their monthly salaries of the respective posts excepting the Deputy Officer-in-charge of administration, Deputy Officer-in-charge of training and the Lady Officer-in-charge.

The Deputy Officer-in-charge of administration, whose academic qualifications are even less than some of the cycle messengers, has passed I.A. Examination after several chances in the third division. He was a football player. It is understood he was known to the Officer-in-charge from his very young age. His appointment in such a responsible post has surprised the subordinates in the department whereas competent and highly qualified gentleman such as Mr. Siddiqui Khan, Professor of Rangoon University, and many others like him are working there most reluctantly.

Mr. Rashid Ahmad Choudhury, B.A., popularly known as Bulbul Choudhury, was appointed as Administrative Officer since the inception of the department. He is an important artist in the province. From the beginning he differed with the Officer-in-charge for his reckless and unreasonable appointment and such other things. I understand that with the assistance of the members of the O.F.A. and C.C.C., two respective dance and music clubs in Calcutta, he was organising a dance and music show in aid of the cyclone sufferers of the Midnapore and 24-Parganas at the request of his bosses. I have got official document in my possession where I find the officers working under these Ministers perhaps with their consent take dance and music performances as the routine work of the department. There was a difference of opinion with Mr. Bulbul, the Officer-in-charge and the Deputy Officer-in-charge of the administration. The Officer-in-charge was the president of the dance show committee. The difference of opinion which turned worse are all about matters which for the sake of decency I do not like to mention. The show was suddenly stopped after two months rehearsal

on the plea that Midnapore people are rebellious and they should not be helped by the Officer-in-charge and the Deputy Officer-in-charge of the administration.

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit.)

Sir, may I have a few minutes more?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Today we have got to finish.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: I will only conclude, Sir.

I challenge the above facts. We cannot but pity these unfortunate self-seeking Ministers under whom officers like these are in charge of this sort of department and the administrations are going on in the above ways and the public money is being wasted like this. We refuse to allow public money to be misused.

Sir HARI SANKER PAUL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak a few words about the present system of distribution and sale of foodstuffs through shops selected to supply them at Government controlled rates in different areas in the city. As a District Commandant of the Jorabagan area I have had occasions to watch the activities of these shops as well as the people receiving supplies through them. What has struck to be extremely unfortunate is that they have not been able to get relief to the extent they were expected to do when the system was introduced. After a trial being given to the system to work it has been weighed and found wanting. Absolute honesty and integrity both on the part of those in charge of the supplies as well as those receiving them have been found to be lacking defeating the very object of introducing the system. The queue system has not appealed to me, for evident reasons, to be working successfully. A great drawback of the system is that the interest of the people of the locality in which such a shop is located is not sufficiently protected and people particularly goondas and undesirable elements from other localities even from distant areas outside the city are often found to be crowding the queues and struggling for vantage positions and finally predominating much at the cost of the milder section. Thus the local needs do not seem to be efficiently served. Then again I have seen people in the queue receiving supplies and collecting them selling the same afterwards in the black market creating a situation which is simply intolerable. It is a constant occurrence that supplies get exhausted long before even a considerable portion of the line is served and the rest although waiting long in high expectations have to go back sorely disappointed and disgusted. Sun-strokes and other accidents amongst these unfortunate waiters are growing in number. The needy middle class section, again, does not get any benefit primarily because they cannot stand in the queue for want of time having to attend to their office duty or business and also for their prestige, and their womenfolk certainly cannot come out for receiving supplies. In fact, this queue system has proved an absolute failure and it is not for me to lay the blame on any particular body or individual in this connection.

These shops again are not provided with regular and sufficient supplies to meet the requirements of the locality, the extent of which has not been properly ascertained before. It goes without saying that in any system of distribution and sale of food-grains the primary factor that can make it work successfully is this question of sufficient and regular supply.

In the light of my personal experience my suggestion is the doing away with this queue system. Particular shops should be selected or appointed for serving the particular area in a locality. The zonal system I advocate and in my opinion this will very greatly facilitate the work of efficient and effective distribution and sale of food-grains. In the locality where such shops will be selected the families therein either in *bustees* or in houses should be categorically noted and according to the number of members in those families identity cards may be issued to them and supplies may be had by production of those cards in which the respective quotas may be catered. Of course a rateable reduction should be effected in the supplies to be made to a particular family according to the extent of benefit their members will be receiving, if at all, from their offices or other sources. The food rationing system also with all its preliminaries will, if introduced, greatly relieve the present distress and I understand some such system is under consideration of the Government. Let us hope that prompt action and some sort of immediate measure will be taken by the Government to ensure an immediate improvement in the situation in this respect and there is no time to plan and scheme at leisure when people are almost gone off their head in their strenuous efforts to procure their means of sustenance. The quality and quantity of output of labour has been rapidly deteriorating in every sphere of business life in the province and I strongly urge the Government to take immediate and necessary action to avoid worse developments.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say a few words on the motion moved by Mr. Hamilton regarding black markets. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the fact that previously we held a conference to discuss the food problems of the province, but it ended practically in nothing. Everywhere, in cities, in towns and in the mufassil there are numerous orders for control of prices and supplies, but these are obeyed more in breach than in observance. I pointed out these things and wrote to the Hon'ble Minister and told him that these things should be effectively controlled, but to my utter misfortune I did not get any reply, nor has any action been taken. In my district last year there was practically no crop. In normal times even Pabna is a deficit district, but even in that place Government has not taken any action to bring foodstuffs either from the neighbouring districts or from any other place. Several correspondences were made with the Government and the other day I put a question to the Hon'ble Minister whether boats are being detained in Assam with paddy and rice. The Hon'ble Minister could not reply but he assured me that he would be pleased to enquire about the matter. A large number of boats are there, and merchants going to other districts, namely, Dinajpur, Malda and Rangpur for rice and paddy are not allowed by the local District Magistrates to purchase the same and bring it to the district of Pabna. The present

District Magistrate is practically callous over the situation and I am very sorry to say that the little attention which he pays is only for the towns and not for the mufassil where the people are really suffering. The mode of supply to the customer in the control shops is a painful scenery. No control shops have got, we understand, sufficient stock; even half or one-fourth of that stock is not sold to the poor consumer. Only a portion of it is sold in a dilatory process to the consumer and for the most part is sold by the back-door and hence there is a black market. Hoarding and speculation is not an offence in normal times, but at a time when food-grains are not available readily at every place Government should have taken precautions that the ordinances might not be enforced at the cost of the poor people. Sir, we are supporting the Government all along with the hope that Government will take proper measures and proper care to do away with these difficulties. Next year there is a gloomy prospect as the cultivators have not yet got their seeds though we are crying loudly for the supply of seeds even from the month of Pous. The sowing season has already begun, but the cultivators are not getting seeds either of the *aus* or the *aman* crop and we do not know what will be the state in the province if they cannot find seeds to sow their lands now. I therefore want that the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge and the Hon'ble Chief Minister will clearly let us know what they have decided; otherwise I warn them that it will not be possible for us to support them.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall not detain the House for more than one minute. Unfortunately the Hon'ble Home Minister does not happen to be present, but I expect that his colleagues will convey to him two points that I want information upon. The first thing is that Government appointed a Jail Industries Enquiry Committee of which I happened to be the unfortunate Chairman. Money was spent——

Mr. SPEAKER: That matter will come up later. We are now discussing "Extraordinary charges".

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I am sorry; I withdraw. (Laughter.)

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say a few words on cut motion No. 13 which was moved by my honourable friend Mr. Hamilton yesterday.

I would like in the first instance to make it quite clear that this cut motion is not a condemnation of the new Food Minister who has just taken over his new portfolio; it is a condemnation, Sir, of black markets and speculation which are depriving the people of their food and a condemnation of a Ministry which has done nothing to stop it.

Sir, we are not condemning the cultivator for holding on to his paddy, for his confidence has been lost and Government actions and statements, past and present, have tended more to increase that loss of confidence than to restore it. Moreover he knows perfectly well that if he parts with his paddy it will go into the hands of the hoarder and the higher prices which will be obtained

will not, in any way, go to benefit him. His confidence, *i.e.*, the confidence of the cultivator, Sir, must be restored. And that can only be done by propaganda and persuasion. So far we have had no evidence of any such efforts being made in that direction. This problem, Sir, has not come upon us suddenly out of the night but has been brought about by the persistent failure of the Ministry and it is at present constituted to take any effective action or indeed any action at all against those social lepers who are rapidly driving the country to a state of desperation. Their weak and vacillating action torn between the support of this party and that party, of this individual and that individual has only aided and abetted the speculator and the hoarder, and these anti-social elements cannot be rooted out unless a change is brought about rapidly and a very radical change at that.

We know that this problem—the problem created by black markets and speculation—is not one which is peculiar to this province nor peculiar to India but has affected every country which has had imposed upon it the abnormal conditions of war economy. Strong measures and prompt measures are essential if this problem is to be solved, and the performance of this Ministry in the past many months has given us no confidence whatsoever that it is capable of mobilising the opinion of the country behind it to the extent of taking effective measures to put matters right. We shall probably hear the argument that the punishment of speculators will only tend to drive stocks underground and stop the normal flow of trade in the province. That argument, Sir, we believe, to be unsound. In actual fact that result has already been achieved by the policy of appeasement which this Government has followed The fact that this Government has been compelled to arrange for import of rice from other provinces is the direct result of that policy of appeasement. It is not correct that legitimate trade will be stopped if illegitimate trade is punished, and we do not believe that the worst offenders cannot be traced.

Sir, black markets and speculation cannot be ended by a few Secretariat measures, a few Government promises or a few mild warnings. These have been ineffective and have always plunged us deeper in the mire.

We, Sir, have therefore no alternative but to condemn and condemn roundly a Ministry which obsessed by other and less worthy activities have failed to exert themselves in this most fundamental of all difficulties. We shall probably be told—and I expect to be told—that my remarks are entirely unconstructive and destructive and completely lacking in detailed measures and suggestions. But the time for that, Sir, is past, we have from this side of the House made these suggestions in the past but there was no result. We, Sir, are actuated by no personal animosity in condemning the Government for its failure to deal with black markets and speculators who are depriving the people of their food. We have no personal animosity against any member of the Ministry. I like the Hon'ble Chief Minister personally and I like many of his colleagues. But we must condemn the present state of affairs and condemn it as strongly as we can. We—seek no political advantage nor, as this House knows very well, do we seek office, but we do seek the establishment of a stronger, cleaner and healthier administration

with the moral support of the country behind it and capable of putting an end to the present serious state of affairs.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ——

Mr. SPEAKER: How long will you take?

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Sir, I will take five minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, I will give you three minutes.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: All right, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, dealing with the motion "Failure to deal with black markets and speculation in and hoarding of foodstuffs" I must at the outset say that the Hon'ble Minister, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca who was in charge of the Department of Food Supplies is not only responsible but aided and abetted these offenders by his utter ignorance and neglect to check up where the bulk of the controlled quota found their way.

You cannot make a success of Self-Government by placing incompetent men in responsible places drawing big salaries and expect the I.C.S. officials to do the work by thinking out plans for you. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition Benches.) If the plan goes wrong, who is to blame—the Minister or the I.C.S. official? If you want the game, you must take the blame. You cannot have it both ways.

Now, let us deal with the most important item, rice, the staple food of the Bengalis. The Calcutta scheme is that the cheapest quality should sell at 4 annas 3 pies per seer or Rs. 10-12 per maund while the market price runs up to 7 annas per seer or Rs. 17-8 per maund, and 2 seers or a seer is distributed to any person who queues up. Did the Nawab Sahib expect by controlling the price of 25 per cent. of the rice imported into Calcutta to bring down the price of the 75 per cent.? Well, if he did so it would be like restoring the position of our currency by suggesting to the Government that if Banks issued a certain amount of sovereigns to the public at Rs. 15 the price of gold would fall. The allotment made regarding the control of rice was done by an I.C.S. Controller. His (the Nawab's) duty was to see that 25 per cent. was actually distributed and did not find its way to the black market. What is the black market? The black market is said to be where a great portion, if not the greater portion, of the controlled stuff finds its way and where contractors purchase to supply agents of tea gardens and factories for their coolies and also to stevedores for Captains of ships for the use of Indian crew. A few bags removed from control shop here and there and reported or not reported by the police, the Civic Guard or the A.R.P. officers did not constitute the black market. What steps were taken by the Minister to stop the leakage? None whatever! What proof have you that 25 per cent. of the rice was distributed to control shops? None whatever! We cannot strain at gnats and swallow camels. (Cries of "Hear, hear, from Opposition Benches.) If the poor are to be given charity, then issue cash coupons to them at 4 annas 3 pies, sell this quality of rice everywhere at a uniform rate and the rice will flow in. Your coupons should just cover the

number of seers you wish to give away monthly at 4 annas and 3 pies. The coupons can later be cashed and accounts adjusted. Surely in demanding Self-Government we do not want a Government of the people for fools, for we are not all fools. (Laughter.) Let us form a new Government of the united people taking the best brains of the Hindus, the Scheduled Castes, the Muslims and the British. We will certainly want the best in our present Cabinet (cries of "Hear, hear")—man like the Hon'ble Mr. P. N. Banerjee who at this critical moment is put in charge of this department—what greater compliment could the Premier have paid him? (Applause and cheers.)

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the other day I made the position—at least I tried to make the position—of our party perfectly clear in this House. Sir, we are not satisfied with this Cabinet—we think that the food question has been bungled. But, we do not approve of the vote of censure as a method for the reshuffling of this Ministry. As I said, Mr. Speaker (interruptions from the Muslim League benches)—I beg of the Muslim League Party to allow me to proceed. I do not mind interruptions, but today I hope they will allow me to proceed uninterrupted.

I was going to say, Sir, as I said the other day, we are for a Cabinet consisting of all parties who are prepared to work this constitution, and we are quite prepared to give our blessings to such a Ministry and I may also say with humility that in this House the blessings of our party are not without value.

Therefore, Sir, in the present circumstances though we think that the Ministry should be reshuffled, we do not think that the vote of censure is the correct method. I want to put one question to the European Bloc and also to Sir Nazimuddin: I do not know what is going to be the result of the voting, but supposing the vote of censure is passed, what do they expect will happen? Sir Nazimuddin will be the Chief Minister and I believe Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy will be the Food Minister. Sir, immediately fresh trouble will begin. What will happen is this: there will again be lobbying, there will be again canvassing and the Ministry of Sir Nazimuddin will find all its time taken up (cries of "No", "no" from the Muslim League benches) —I am sure it will—in maintaining themselves in power.

It is not a question of maintaining the Ministers in office. That is not the way the present problems of the country and the present problems will be solved. I would also ask the Chief Minister one question. I want to ask him how long will he go on in this fashion? It is much better for Mr. Fazlul Huq to adopt a bold policy. If it is a fact that he is being frustrated in his attempts to do his duty by the civil servants, he must place all the facts before us on the floor of the House and take the House in his confidence; and if he then finds that he does not get the support of the majority he will go out, but he will go out with all the glory that will be his due.

Sir, I was a little surprised to find that the European Bloc is supporting the censure motion. So far as I know and so far as every Indian knows,

the European Bloc is not much interested, in the food question of this province. (Cries of "No, no" from the European Bloc.) You may say, "No", as many times as you like, but that is a fact for you are more interested in the goods of the province than in the good of the province. When the present bungling has been to their interest, it is, Sir, a matter of great surprise to me to find that it is the European Bloc who is moving the vote of censure. Anything coming from them, I must confess, we do look upon with suspicion.

Before, Sir, we decide whether we should vote at all, we would, however, like to have a clear statement from the Hon'ble Minister, Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee, the Food Minister, and we would like to have a full statement from the Chief Minister. First of all, we want to know who is responsible for the present bungling. We have a suspicion in our mind that the present Director of Civil Supplies is mainly responsible for bungling the whole thing, and the Ministry or the Minister in charge had simply to say ditto to everything done by the Director. On that matter, Sir, we want a clear enunciation of the policy. We want a better organisation. We want Mr. P. N. Banerjee to tell us what he proposes to do in this matter. After all, he is new to the office. We are inclined to give him a chance if we are satisfied with his speech.

Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I should like to say one word more, and that is in voting on this vote of censure we have to consider the alternative also. Today in the *Statesman* Sir Nazimuddin has issued a statement which, with your permission, Sir, I propose to read. I will read only those portions which refer to us, non-Muslims. He says, "I would also like to urge the non-Munslim leaders who are supporting the Ministry to request Mr. Fazlul Huq to resign for the establishment of a better relation between the Hindus and the Muslims. It is obvious that persons who have lost the confidence of the entire Muslim Bengal should not be upheld by them in office". We do not approve of the statement that has been issued. But I would also ask Sir Nazimuddin this question, the principle he has enunciated in the statement, is he prepared to apply equally in the case of the Hindus? In the matter of forming the Ministry if he does not get any representative Hindu to join his Ministry what will he do?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI He will take his show boys.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: He may do that, but he cannot get representative Hindus. Sir, I would like to know what would Sir Nazimuddin do if he wins and forms a Cabinet and if representative Hindus refuse to join his Cabinet?

I shall proceed with the statement of Sir Nazimuddin in the next paragraph: this is what Sir Nazimuddin says, "The policy of propping up unrepresentative men has led to communal embitterment in the Congress provinces. It will be worse in a province where the Muslims are in the majority. If my Hindu friends desire communal harmony and sincerely wish it, they will I hope, change their present attitude and adopt a course which will lead to the desired object without delay".

This is an amazing statement to make—a statement made by a person who desires to form a cabinet. It implies to say, it does not matter what policy he follows, it does not matter what programme he places before the country, it only means that if we non-Muhammadans do not support him it will create communal disharmony. That, Sir, is a threat to which we at least cannot yield. However, as I have already said, we shall decide which way we shall vote or whether we shall vote at all after hearing the speech of the Hon'ble Minister in charge.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thought that after the very difficult days through which this province has passed and is passing, after the terrible distress which we are witnessing, it would not have been necessary to demonstrate to this House that the Ministry has not only failed in its food policy but has deliberately supported black marketers and hoarders. I do not know, Sir, where the leader of the Congress group has remained in hiding, as this problem has been under discussion since last year. He seems to be of opinion that evils have come upon us only since the establishment of the Directorate of Civil Supplies. I may take his mind back a little bit further. One can trace it, Sir, long before such a Directorate was even thought of, and the price of sugar was first controlled, and later came the control in the price of rice. Permits were issued so that no one could deal in sugar and no one could get sugar without the permit in his hand. The Ministry, Sir, it is well known interfered with this issue of permits. There were long queues of applicants for permits before and in the houses of the Hon'ble Minister who was in charge of this department and other Ministers, one of them being no less a person than the Chief Minister of Bengal. Does Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy expect the House to believe that the shops, the 25 or 35 shops, allotted to Kali Babu, were so allotted for the benefit of the Directorate of Civil Supplies. There was no Directorate then in existence. Regular traders could not get permits for rice, but Kali Babu could get permits for 10,000 maunds of rice at a time. Does Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy expect us to believe that the prosecutions against Kali Babu and the favourities of Ministers were withdrawn at the instance of the Director of Civil Supplies? (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Kali Babu was your friend also.) (Laughter.) No, no. Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal is mistaken. Not only Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal is mistaken but Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal is stating an utter untruth. I do not know Kali Babu. I have never seen the man before, but I have heard of Kali Babu and all these things.

Now, Sir, the fact is clear that black marketing started long before the Directorate of Civil Supplies came into being and corruption, I am given to understand by Dr. Sanyal, permeated the department itself. If there is corruption in the department, if persons have to pay for their permits it is not possible that they will be able to sell their goods in the market at the controlled prices. Firstly, they have to make up and get back the money which they have paid for getting those permits. Secondly, Sir,

they feel that they are outside the bounds of rules and regulations and there is no restraint upon them, and therefore they do not feel called upon to sell goods at the controlled price.

Then, Sir, what of those long queues outside the shops established after the Directorate of Civil Supplies? There we find the same defiance of rules, namely, that goods are sold from those shops in small quantities and the rest is black marketed. The self-respect of the people of Calcutta has been destroyed; the city of Calcutta has become a city of beggars. Persons who want this rice have to stand there to beg for Government charity or mercy. And then some of this rice only is sold, and a major portion disposed of surreptitiously in the black market. Sir, black markets have become a standard feature of this Ministry; they have ceased to be a scandal; they have ceased even to be a crime. The are a concomitant of this Ministry so long as it remains in power.

Now, Sir, I come to hoarding. Hoarding by speculators, by persons who never traded in rice before should have been stopped right at the beginning. Hoarding has grave dangers for the people; a great amount of rice is withdrawn from circulation. People when they want rice do not find it and thereafter even persons who do not wish to hoard, who have no desire to lay by, keep back for their own safety a greater quantity of rice or matches or oil or salt which they otherwise would not have kept. Consequently more and more of these commodities are withdrawn from the market. The dangerous nature of hoarding should have been apparent from the beginning and we find, Sir, that in September, 1942, we drew pointed attention to this, and what was the reply? The Hon'ble Finance Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, then gave the reply and stated that he was glad that Mr. Tamizuddin Khan had raised this question. He said: "So far as that question is concerned, no one can answer it definitely, namely, the large stock that had gone underground owing to hoarding, but we do feel that a considerable quantity of rice has gone underground. We have issued instructions to District Officers and steps have been taken and are being taken. What those steps are, my honourable friend will not expect me to disclose here." Unfortunately, Sir, those steps never came to light. The public never knew what those steps were and hoarding has continued merrily until this very day. The reason for that was that the Government would not take the public into its confidence. We convened meetings, which were attended and responded to by all the major political parties in this province, in which we pointed out that steps and immediate steps must be taken against black marketing and hoarding.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who are biggest hoarders?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We do not care who are the biggest hoarders.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Are not the Europeans the biggest hoarders?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Even though Dr. Sanyal is the biggest hoarder, I say steps should be taken. Steps ought to have been taken against hoarders even if they were the biggest people in the commercial world.

Now, Sir, nothing was done in regard to them. I am told that today Mr. Banerjee has accepted an ordinance of the Government of India directed against hoarding. This does not save the situation. It is no use taking last minute steps of this nature driven by the whip and the lash of a budget cut motion. It is no use coming to the House and trying to wash yourself of the guilt which has brought this province to this pass by a last minute ablution.

Sir, the co-operation of the people was offered but that co-operation was not accepted. It was stated that we were political parties and therefore, although the vast majority of the people of the province owe their allegiance to one or other political party, we are brushed aside, the Government alone being the sole representative of all political parties.

Sir, Government is storing trouble for itself. Our people are patient, they can starve, they can commit suicide, but a time will come when their exasperation is bound to break the bounds of laws and order, and then when it passes beyond endurance, you will have looting which has already commenced, you will have arson and other crimes. Is it not time, Sir, that something was done, something drastic, and the only way we feel that anything drastic can be done is for this Ministry as a first step to realise what it has done and to suffer, self- immolation for the good of the Province as a penance for its crimes? The Hon'ble Ministers do not appear to understand what mass psychology is. The mass people can bear things up to a point, but if hunger drives them to lose all respect for the established order. then nothing will be able to restrain them. Do not bring the country to that sorry pass. I am sorry in a way that I have to say this when a new Food Minister wants to be given a chance. Sir, I do not think that the Ministry can escape its responsibilities by changing horses in midstream. By appointing the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee it has accepted the censure that the last Minister responsible for this portfolio was incapable and incompetent, and therefore it was necessary to have another Minister. I do not think that under these circumstances the stand taken by the Congress Party is justifiable, namely, that now that we are having a Food Minister let us give him a chance. Sir, if this were correct a Ministry can always escape responsiblity for its misdeeds. A Minister can bungle and can merrily bring the province to the verge of ruin and yet when the question of a vote of censure arises, the Ministry can change the portfolio and say "we have now got a new man, let him have a chance". (Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: It is a new portfolio.) Then there can possibly be no vote of censure. The Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee was a member of the old Ministry and was partly responsible, being a colleague of the late Minister-in-charge of this portfolio, because all the Ministers are responsible on the basis of joint responsibility for the acts done by one or other of the Ministers. The Ministry cannot shed

itself or any single Minister cannot shed himself of the responsibility for the conduct and for the acts of his predecessor. Sir, the people outside are shrieking for a change. Believe me, Sir, and I would request the House to believe and every honourable member of this House knows that the name of this Ministry outside is nauseating. (Question, question," from the Progressive Coalition Party.) The people want a change and they demand a change. The recent elections have shown that Mr. Fazlul Huq and his colleagues do not enjoy the confidence of the masses. If this Ministry had done something for the people, if it had done some good to the people, it would have got a better reception from the country than the defeat of all his pet followers including one of his Ministers. Probably I have no justification for reading the minds of my Hindu friends, but having moved with them, having talked to them, having discussed matter with them particularly in the nearer past, I make bold to say, Sir, that Mr. Fazlul Huq does not also enjoy the confidence of the Hindus. (Mr. Atul Chandra Sen: It is not true; and cries of "true, true," from the Muslim League Opposition benches.) His recent letters to Mr. Jinnah, his sporadic attempts to come into the Muslim League whenever he found his position weak, have been blamed and condemned by the Hindu community. No member of this House can now say that Mr. Fazlul Huq still enjoys the confidence of the Hindu community. Sir, he stands exposed, because to all the communities both inside and outside the House it is clear that Mr. Fazlul Huq changes his opinion as it suits his prospects. (Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri: As you did in 1924.)

Sir, I regret to say that some Hindu leaders are utilising Mr. Fazlul Huq. They are behind him and are propping him up. Relying on their support Mr. Fazlul Huq says that he can get 50,000 people to respond if he calls a meeting. I doubt it very much. I do not think, Sir, he will get the support of those Hindus who believe in a Hindu-Muslim settlement. I do not believe that he will get the support of that growing body of Hindus that believe that there should be a settlement as early as possible between the Congress and the Muslim League. He may get the support of those few who believe that this Ministry ought to be continued and ought to be propped up, because through Mr. Fazlul Huq, they can preserve their own influence in the administration. A clever speaker of the old in the Oxford Union once said regarding certain political leaders, "They turn their back upon the people and then claim that the people are at their back". (Loud laughter.) Mr. Fazlul Huq has turned his back upon the people of this Province and now he thinks that the people are going to support him.

Sir, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy has raised the question and other Hindu friends of mine have also raised the question "what will happen if Mr. Fazlul Huq goes and Sir Nazimuddin comes into the picture?". We too, they say, cannot claim that we have or shall have the support of the Hindus. What will happen to us, if as Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy threatens the Hindus refuse to support us? Sir, we cannot answer that question. The last five years and more have shown that the Ministry should not rely solely upon one community. Mr. Fazlul Huq relies solely upon the Hindu Community.

His Muslim party members know fully well that they are not being supported by their constituencies. If, however, the reins of responsibility are placed in our hands, we feel that whatever may be the attitude in to day's voting of Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy or the suspended Congress or Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee or the other Hindu members, it shall be our endeavour, even though they do not give us their co-operation now, it shall be our endeavour, I shall try desperately, to seek their co-operation and their confidence.

Sir, Dr Syamaprasad Mookerjee jeered at us the other day when he said that we had been approaching them for a settlement. He thought that by bringing this to light we shall lose our caste with the Muslims; he thought that we would stand exposed before them, if they found that we wanted to make friends with Hindus. That, Sir, is an entire misunderstanding of the situation. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee conceives the Muslim community as a blood-thirsty monster which is out to crush the Hindus. In that he is entirely mistaken. We who are in constant contact with our community know its mind. I can declare on the floor of this House that wherever Hindu-Muslim co-operation has been spoken of wherever we have said that in this country we have got to live side by side, the Muslim community has applauded and supported it. Far from his jeers affecting us adversely, the Muslim communty endorses entirely our efforts to bring about peace between Hindus and Muslims and communal harmony in the country.

Sir, it may be said that if this is so, why don't we agree to work together now? What is there to prevent us from getting together now? Sir, we have tried and tried in vain. We have tried and as I have said—I use the word in its fullest significance —desperately not because we want to get into power but because we feel that Hindus and Muslims must work together. We have tried desperately for it but we have failed. As long as Mr. Fazlul Huq stays there, as long as the Hindu parties think that they can use him as a puppet, as long as they can bolster him up and support him, there is very little chance of compromise and understanding between us. An honourable understanding will only come if this impediment in our way is removed. Sir, it reminds us of what is sometimes presented before us, that Hindus and Muslims cannot come to an agreement as long as the British Government remains in power because both of them will quarrel. Now, that is exactly the position here. We cannot come to an agreement as long as one particular person is being propped up by one party. I wish to make this declaration on behalf of the Muslim League Party with the fullest sense of responsibility that should this impediment disappear, we shall sit down together and on our part there will be no stone left unturned to arrive at an agreement between the Hindus and Muslims.

Sir, I call upon the House to express the wishes of the vast majority of the people outside. I call upon them to pass this vote of censure. When I say the vast majority of the people, I mean the unanimous wishes of the people outside except the hoarders and black-marketers.

Mr. ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: The *Fatkawallas* are there.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ——.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, before the Hon'ble Minister replies, may I be allowed to say just a few words in view of the speech of the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party?

Mr. SPEAKER: You will not take a long time, I hope.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I feel, Sir, that in view of what has been stated by Mr. Suhrawardy, there is very little for me to say, but in that statement which I have made and which Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy read out, I tried to place the point of view of the Muslim public before the non-Muslim leaders who are supporting the Ministry at the present time. Sir, I would ask Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy and the members of his party to look at the question from the angle from which we are looking. This reminds me of the famous remark once made in a previous Assembly by the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq that the Congress Party should look at it from the right angle and not from any other angle. As far as our record goes, the All-India Muslim League and the Provincial Muslim League have always made it clear that they are ready and willing always to co-operate with representative Hindu organisations in all political matters. Unfortunately our experience in Bengal has been that in the past the Muslim representatives have been treated in the manner as feared by Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy, but he cannot give one instance where Muslims have refused to co-operate with representative Hindus. It was in the old days when Sir Abdur Rahim was refused co-operation by non-Muslims. But I ask him to cite one instance where Muslims have ever refused co-operation on communal ground with any recognised leader of the Hindu opinion. I repeat what has been stated by Mr. Suhrawardy that it is the recognised policy of the Muslim League to co-operate with non-Muslim organisations in settlement of Indian political problems.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all my life I have been accustomed to meet embarassing positions, but this morning my embarrassing position has been heightened by the fact that I accepted charge from an overwhelming sense of public duty of the new portfolio only four days ago. I can appreciate the point of view emphasised by my friend the honourable Mr. Suhrawardy when he stated that I should accept the responsiblity of the Ministry as a whole. That is a self-evident constitutional proposition. I do not accept the very kind compliments given to me by my honourable friend Mr. Hendry, the Leader of the European Group. He is fully aware of the fact that the responsibility of a Minister who is a servant both of the Crown as well as of the Legislature is several and joint.

Sir, this question of food supply is a question of the most vital importance and on the last occasion when this debate was pressed to a

division, I thought in the innermost mind of mine that my honourable friend the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca had been made a scapegoat.

Sir, when I accepted this portfolio I made it clear that I did not want to be a sacrificial goat. Sir, the problem is full of difficulties. The difficulties are of a most complex nature, and whatever political opinion may be focussed upon those difficulties they cannot certainly be solved by the votes and the speeches made in the Legislature. I may be wrong, but that is the view which a very eminent English statesman took in the year 1801, Pitt. Sir, is it the fault of the Ministry that Burma fell and that the rice supply from Burma was completely cut off? Is it the fault of the Ministry that consequently there was an influx of population in this province? Is it the fault of the Ministry that due to overriding military exigencies of the situation large-scale mass evacuation had to be undertaken? Is it the fault of the Ministry that this province faced shipping difficulties? Is it the fault of the Ministry that pursuant to the policy dictated by the Government of India it had to execute a policy of denial of boats and other modes of transport? A suggestion was made from a very high quarter that bullock carts might just as well be commandeered. My humble suggestion as a layman unfortunately unfamiliar with military secrets was that if the enemy through the transport of the age-worn tradition-bound bullock cart can come and overrun this province, then that enemy must be a very slow enemy. Is it the fault of this Ministry that it was called upon to make large exports to countries other than this country? Yesterday, Sir, I gave complete figures of the disposal and the distribution of the denial rice. Is it the fault of this Ministry that in striving to stand by the necessities of war it has fed the army? Is it the fault of the Ministry that cyclone, floods and other freaks of nature made there visitations to this Province? Is it the fault of the Ministry that there was a poor winter crop this year? Is it the fault of the Ministry again that pests appeared and these pests contributed in no mean manner to the poor production of this province? Is it the fault of this Ministry that even in the realm of marketing there was competition, competitive buying over which this Ministry and any other Ministry notwithstanding the bold words of Mr. Suhrawardy or the virile capacities of my friend, Sir, Nazimuddin, could have any control whatever?

On the top of this have we not to consider the new amendment to the Government of India Act, section 126A? Have we not got today to carry on the suggestions and sometimes the orders of the Government of India? When Mr. Suhrawardy steps into the position of the Food Minister, either today or tomorrow, he will find out that the Government of India has appointed a Regional Commissioner for the whole of the eastern provinces with practically dictatorial powers. This Legislature has no jurisdiction over any of the calamities perpetrated either by men or by nature. It has only one jurisdiction, viz., to use the estimable language of my honourable friend, Mr. Suhrawardy, to lash the Ministry.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: What about the jute acreage?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Please have patience. I shall deal with all the questions that may be addressed to me. In August last the Directorate of Civil Supplies was created. So far as the personnel of the Directorate is concerned, the Directorate was created but I, as a Minister had no knowledge, cannot possibly have any knowledge about the creation of posts belonging to another portfolio, but may I ask in all humility a question to my honourable friend, the leader of the European group, when pronouncing a verdict of condemnation upon the Ministry, was the appointment of the Directorate of Civil Supplies or the appointment of his successor, or the appointment of the Food Grains Purchasing Officer or the appointment of the Secretary to the Distributing Trades Tribunal—was any of these appointments made for the purpose of placating public opinion in India, and the supporters of the Ministry? (A voice from the European Group: "Yes".) My honourable friend says "yes". Sir, I have all along believed in the doctrine of smoke-screens, but a greater smoke-screen than this answer in the affirmative cannot come before the human vision.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who made those appointments?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know. I can only tell you this that the Ministry as a whole was not responsible for these appointments. Please don't be impatient. I have sat quietly like a lamb, listening to the valuable speeches which have run down the lips of the various members of this House——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not a lamb but a wet cat. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: But even a wet cat sometimes jumps. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, so far as I am concerned I have been dealing with what I have been able to do during the last 4 days that I have been in office and what I propose to do immediately. During the last 4 days, all my time practically, apart from the lessons which I learnt in the Legislature, was taken up for the purpose of securing supplies from outside the Province. My honourable friend, Mr. Hamilton, holding the brief for Mr. Kennedy, last evening talked about the release of the large stocks of rice which Government has in hand. He obviously mentioned this proposal for the purpose of saving the freezing and the frozen condition of the market. That is also my point of view. I have been able to secure from other provinces large supplies of food grains. I cannot, for obvious reasons, at this operational stage declare before the House the exact quantities of the food grains that will be pouring into Calcutta, but as I said the other day—and I did not give the assurance in vain—that the prices of food grains and other commodities are bound to come down. In fact the price of rice has already come down. (Applause from the Treasury Benches.) Yesterday I was told that price of wholesale rice has come down by Rs. 3 per maund.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: That is not a fact, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Of course, a bad news for Mr. Ispahani.

Criticisms have been levelled against the working of the Department and more than once the honourable member has referred to bribery and corruption. I have not had the time to go minutely through the details of these charges, but if there have been cases of bribery and corruption, and if I continue to remain on the saddle, then I shall be only too happy to have specific instances of these cases of bribery and corruption.

I can give this assurance most solemnly to this House that all cases of bribery and corruption from the highest to the lowest shall be decided without any distinction of race, caste, creed and colour, and for this purpose special tribunals will be set up which may for the sake of expedition have to follow special procedure. Bribery and corruption are rampant in every stage of society in this province. Who sympathises with the person who is guilty of bribery and corruption? The person who offers bribe and who thrives by corruption. My honourable friend reminds me even in the matter of securing votes. (Laughter.) Sir, in order to be able to suppress bribery and corruption and in order to be able to fight out the hoarder, it is absolutely essential that the Ministry should have the powers. I have all along maintained and I maintain now, and I have accepted office on the condition that the Ministry alone is responsible for the formulation of policy and not the Directorate of Civil Supplies. Secondly, that the Ministry must be advised by a Central Advisory Council, as I mentioned elsewhere. The Central Advisory Council, I may say, will meet at least once a week and the members thereof will consist of two representatives of the great political parties in the legislature or outside the legislature at the choice of the parties concerned. It will also consist of representatives of the trade and consumers, and some experts may have seats. Sir, I have not been able to realise or visualise who the experts are in this particular line of business. The only fault of my friend the Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur was that he relied on his technical experts. My European friends castigate the Ministry when the Minister concerned ventures to say "no" to the demands in the department of law and order, and when another Minister in another department relies upon that very technical advice they say that the Minister must be penalised. That reminds one of the attitude which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain took up in connection with the grant of Home Rule to Ireland by Gladstone. In the first Home Rule Bill, Ulster was excluded. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain took the cudgel up because Ulster was excluded. In the second Home Rule Bill Ulster was included, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain took the lash because Ulster had been included. (Laughter.) Sir, I propose to set up Advisory Councils in the districts and subdivisions, because I feel that it is absolutely essential that public opinion must be mobilised. Towards this whatever assistance the Minister can render, whatever help our public officials can render, will be rendered. There is no doubt whatever that this is a question in which public opinion has a very vital, very valid and very virile place. That public opinion must be mobilised. It will effectively check corruption, it will fight bribery, it will certainly deal with the question both of supply and distribution.

Sir, I have not been able to realise or understand the grievances of my honourable friends of the European Group. Whatever shortcomings my honourable friend the Nawab Bahadur or his Directorate of Civil Supplies may have had, none of them certainly disclose those shortcomings so far as my friends opposite are concerned. Four criticisms were made on the last occasion by Mr. Hamilton. The first was the lack of statistics. Sir, is that the creation of the present Ministry? The system of collecting statistics, I maintain and maintain boldly, was wrong, but was it not a legacy of one hundred and seventy-five years of British rule in this country?

The second criticism was about the control shops and a suggestion was made that the control shops must be increased in number. Sir, I have considered this question during the last four days, and I am going to increase the number of control shops and I am hoping to be able to double, if not treble, the supplies which are given to them. As soon as adequate supplies are obtained, Government must be in a position to give proper distribution, and in this policy we have to include the essential services and men whose services are necessary in the sea, i.e., the seamen. That is the position which I have always taken up with the Directorate.

Then I shall deal with Mr. Hamilton's proposals about hoarding, profiteering and black market. The existence of black markets, Mr. Speaker, I should imagine is a disgrace to any civilised country. But my honourable friend Mr. Hendry in the course of his speech this morning took a very realistic view of things. He said that black markets are not peculiar to this province but black markets become peculiar to this province for the purpose of trouncing the Ministry. Sir, it is not accurate to say that hoarders and speculators have not been dealt with by this Government. I have just collected the statistics from Calcutta, and if this point was raised before I would have taken the trouble of getting statistics from police records in the different parts of the province. The figures are these: In 1939 there were three prosecutions; in 1940 there were 141 prosecutions; in 1941, 122; in 1942, 237; and in 1943, 115 people were apprehended during the last three months. This record is not big nor black, and I can tell my honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy who was certainly in charge of this present portfolio included in a wider orbit up till December, 1941, that the cases of the prosecution were certainly less than those in 1942, and certainly less proportionately than in 1943. (Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: What is your suggestion? Was he a black-marketeer?) Sir, I dare not make that suggestion in regard to an honourable member of this honourable legislature. My honourable friend Mr. Hendry yesterday referred to legislation against the speculator, against the hoarder, against the person on whose dishonesty black markets thrive and referred to legislation in England about penal servitude for a period of fourteen years. The analogy between England and India is a convenient analogy. We forget that we are not in the same position as England is. We cannot give adequate supplies to our people. We do not enjoy that national freedom which the people of England enjoy. We do not have that complete legislative power which the people of England in their Parliament

have and yet the analogy of England is always brought to the forefront. Take it from me, Sir, that I am definitely against the hoarder, the speculator and the profiteer and steps shall be taken for the purpose of stopping the black markets (*a*) by means of giving adequate supplies to the city and the province, and (*b*) by resort to coercive legislation and execution in an expeditious manner of legislation passed.

My honourable friend Mr. Hendry the other day gave a bit of advice to the Ministry, "Govern or get out". In this charge, speaking for myself, I propose to govern. I hope I shall have his assistance and goodwill in the matter of government and if I cannot govern I shall go out—may not be with his blessings, may be with his condemnation.

Sir, the position of a Provincial Minister reminds me of a classic passage in Maine's "Representative Government". Talking of the President of the French Republic, Sir Henry Sumner Maine said of that exalted office. "The old Kings in France," maintained Maine, "reigned and governed. A constitutional monarch in Britain reigns but does not govern. It has been left to the French President neither to reign nor to govern." (Laughter.) I make no further comments on that classic passage.

I have decided to start a number of shops for women and I am issuing letters of invitation to all the women members of the legislature for taking charge of these shops. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Progressive Coalition party benches.) This I am doing, Sir, irrespective of any party label. I do not care whether the member concerned belongs to the party in power or to the party which is just at present out of power.

I think, Sir, I have met all the points which have been raised in the course of the debate. I have replied specifically and clearly to all the criticisms that have been levelled against the Ministry, and I shall now ask Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy whether he has been satisfied with the replies I have given. (Laughter.) Here is derisive laughter from the Opposition benches for good solid reasons. This is a cut motion which comes under Euclid's definition of geometrical point having position but no magnitude. It is a cut motion which was obviously included within the purview of the food question on which the House divided more than once and it has been brought by way of a side door and a back door for the purpose of cementing that affectionate union between the two parties in the House. (Laughter.)

Sir, my honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy referred to Kali Babu. I have not seen the face of this mysterious gentleman. I have been told that this gentleman represents Tennyson's "Brook": "Ministers may come and Ministers may go but I go on for ever." My honourable friend talked about the grant of permits by the Minister in power in a rather flippant manner in the same way that Roman Catholic Tetzel was alleged to have sold indulgence. My honourable friend's memory in the spirit of self-denial, in the attitude which he has taken up this morning and in the spirit of self-immolation does not go back to the date when he himself was the Commerce Minister in this province. Allegations are not proofs. It is perfectly true, they say in law, that the greater the truth the greater the libel, but I maintain once more that allegations are not proofs.

My honourable friend referred to my appointment in a congratulatory manner of which he is capable and he said that this is a last-minute step on the lash and whip of a cut motion. This is certainly in violation of his principle of self-immolation and his doctrine of self-denying ordinance. Sir, he has harped on the Hindu-Muslim settlement. I am so glad! This Ministry would certainly not have come to office, if this problem had been solved or attempted to be solved by the Ministry which was in power, our predecessor. (Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You are spoiling your speech.) My honourable friend interjects to say that I have been spoiling a good speech. That has been my misfortune, because my honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy says that by the appointment of Mr. Banerjee you cannot change horses in midstream. That is metaphor. I am in the presence of a big crowd in the House; so I am not in midstream and, Sir, I do not resemble that noble animal. I resemble a nobler animal, i.e., donkey, (Laughter.) (Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No, you look like a goat!) Not so long as I do not grow a beard. (Laughter.)

Sir, certain points were raised by my honourable friend Mr. Sur about evacuation. I do readily admit that evacuation has caused tremendous hardship to the evacuees, but the matter did not rest with the Provincial Government, whether it is this Government or some other Government. Subject to the necessities of war, every effort has been made to satisfy these evacuees though satisfaction is remote and, according to my judgment, is not possible. To compel a man to give up his hearth and home is to compel him to give up too much and there can be no solatium in the matter of money compensation. My honourable friend has referred to the shortness of notice. His observations were limited to the early days of evacuation when due to overriding military necessities notices became short. The Provincial Government made a representation to the proper authorities and now notices are not short.

Then, secondly, my friend referred to immediate arrangements for shelters. That is perfectly true, but that, again, is a factor for which the Provincial Government is not responsible. We did try to give shelters to some of the later evacuees when we had also gathered experience, but unfortunately these evacuees themselves did not want to go to shelters provided for them. They wanted to have shelters with their own kith and kin.

Then, Sir, my honourable friend has raised a point about the distinction between the owners of houses and schools in paying compensation, but I would like to point out to him that there is no distinction at all. The assessment of compensation is made by Collectors and instructions have been given that facilities should be given as far as possible so that educational work of the Province may not suffer. The war may lengthen but education cannot afford to die.

Then, Sir, so far as the question of revision of rates of compensation for land is concerned, we have issued revised instructions.

The last question which has been put by my honourable friend is the question whether the Provincial Government has any say in the matter of evacuation. That is a constitutional question governed by the exigencies of the war situation.

My honourable friend Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta referred to the difficulties of the evacuees. That is a question which is not primarily the concern of the Provincial Government. It is the concern of the Central Government, but the suggestions made by her will be forwarded by the Provincial Government to the Government of India without very strong observations because there Mrs. Sen Gupta has agreed with Mr. Suhrawardy.

Sir, these are my words and I just make one plea. I have come new to the office. It is perfectly a constitutional right of His Majesty's Opposition to move any vote of censure it likes, but I am sure neither they nor their supporters do believe that a change of Ministry will bring forward a millennium. The situation in the Province is critical, and it is a matter of regret that all these questions about food supply had to be debated on the floor of this House. In a country which is governed by public opinion, Parliamentary institutions must face realities, and I am, Sir, facing these realities. Sir, I demand one thing for the success of the great task which stands in front of me—the goodwill of all the parties and of all the sections of this House.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, before you call upon the Chief Minister to wind up the debate, there is one point on which I seek elucidation. The Hon'ble Minister said that an officer has been appointed from above for the eastern zone and thus the Ministry in Bengal would be absolutely helpless. Is that the way in which he wishes to approach his new task? I could not grasp the meaning of this Central Officer being placed over the Directorate in the appointment of which he had no hand. Will he kindly explain?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend Mr. Siddiqi like myself was a briefless barrister and his questions are always acute and pointed and therefore my reply is this. I did not say that the Provincial Ministry is absolutely helpless, but due to the exegencies of the situation which my honourable friend understand it has become necessary for the Government of India to appoint a Regional Commissioner for the purpose of dealing with the five Provinces as one economic unit. It is the old, old policy of Zollverein.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I enquire up to what time we propose to sit and when we shall take up the "Jails" debate? This was due to be taken up at 12-30 or 1. In case it is desired by the House not to sit beyond 1 or 1-30 at the latest today, I would like to know if it would be possible to take up "Jails" first on Monday morning, namely, from 9 to 10-30 without having any questions on Monday morning and thereafter we can go on with "Medical and Public Health" and in the afternoon the usual programme may be followed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us finish the matter that is before us and then I will take up this matter.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, that is a relevant issue if you want to sit today. We would like to hear Mr. Basu this morning if it is possible for you to postpone the "Jails" debate to some other time. But if it is not possible we will have to ask that the Chief Minister should straight-away proceed with the reply so that we may have at least one hour, 1-30 to 2-30 for "Jails" debate. Otherwise what is the use of having a prolonged discussion?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think we should finish "Jails" also today, of course if the House agrees.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it possible?

Mr. SPEAKER: Half a day has been allotted for "Jails". That means one hour.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: We generally sit for three hours—one hour for questions and two hours for other business. So, half-day means one hour. I want to finish "Jails" also today. But if the House is not of that opinion, then I will have to ask the Chief Minister about this matter. Let us finish this first.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I do not propose to take up the time of the House at any great length at this fag-end of the day, but some very pertinent questions have been raised by the cut motions of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur and Sir Henry Birkmyre which I think require a reply. It is for that reason that I desire to trouble this House in this most inconvenient hour by offering some observations.

Sir, with regard to the motion which has been moved by my friend Mr. Israil regarding allocation of Civil Defence expenditure between the Government of India and the Government of Bengal, I think no elaborate reply is necessary from me because Mr. Israil has very correctly stated the financial agreement which now obtains between the two Governments. The only thing that he has stressed is that having regard to the peculiar nature of the Civil Defence expenditure which relates exclusively to the situation arising out of the war, this Government should approach the Government of India for further concessions in the matter of financial assistance than they have hitherto made to this Government. I can at once assure my friend that that request has our fullest possible sympathy. We also feel that our hands should be further strengthened by the Government of India and that a greater share of expenditure should be borne by the Government of India than they have hitherto done. At the same time, I desire to make it clear that the attitude of the Government of India in these financial matters has not been unsympathetic. Even during our last pilgrimage—if I may use the expression—to New Delhi carrying our financial burden

on our shoulders, when we approached the Hon'ble Member in charge of Finance, he was extremely sympathetic and he extended various concessions in order to enable this Government to tide over its financial difficulties.

I think, Sir, I am not disclosing a secret when I say that the Government of India have agreed to put off the demand for repayment of the loan or the Ways and Means advance which is going to fall due in June next. They have also agreed to see us through in our attempt to tide over the difficulties from the financial points of view. These are concessions indeed which we must acknowledge with gratitude. At the same time there is considerable force in the demand made by a member of the Opposition that the Government of India could allocate to itself a greater proportion of the Civil Defence expenditure than has yet been done. Now, Sir, coming to the cut motion moved by my friend, Sir Henry Birkmyre, he has referred to the question of tube-wells, sand bags and shelters. As regards tube-wells, the situation, I am glad to say, has considerably improved because a sufficient staff has been appointed by the Corporation and the present estimate is that not more than 5 per cent. of the tube-wells are out of order. Allocation of work to the members of the staff was not satisfactory having regard to the size of the staff which we could appoint, but vigorous steps are being taken in order that these tube-wells may not remain out of order for any length of time.

Now, Sir, so far as complaints regarding unserviceable tube-wells are concerned, I may inform the House that complaints made to the Chief Engineer of the Calcutta Corporation or to the Chief Engineer, Public Health Department of the Government, will be attended to as soon as they are made. These are the two authorities, who will attend to such complaints. Now, Sir, if any mention of such grievance is made, the A.R.P. officers will certainly bring them to the notice of the Corporation. Systematic reports are received from the department regarding the number of agencies and the condition of tube-wells. It has also been arranged to use the A.R.P. sub-area committees which have been set up under the direction of the Central A.R.P. committees in this respect.

As regards shelters the position is this. Government have decided that shelters of some sort must be provided for a hundred per cent. of the bustee population as far as possible. Originally Government decided to begin their shelter programme by constructing shelters for 25 per cent. of the bustee population. It has now been decided that Government should provide shelters for hundred per cent. of the bustee population in Calcutta. Unless it is found that slit trenches are acceptable and used by the people Government have decided that slit trenches should be replaced as soon as possible by some other form of shelter. Arrangements are being made to ensure that the A.R.P. personnel will ascertain and report in individual areas to what extent it is necessary to substitute above ground parabolic shelters for the slit trenches already provided. Government have decided that adequate shelters for women must be arranged where there is a local feeling in favour of such provisions. Government have decided that adequate arrangements where they do not exist must be made to prevent

looting in bustees during air-raids so that bustee people will have no hesitation in seeking shelters during air-raids. Instructions are being issued to the Controller to take up the problem with the Commissioner of Police and to draw his attention, if necessary, to the feeling on this subject. A number of private houses has been amicably arranged as shelters for bustee people. Arrangements are being made with the A.R.P. personnel under the Controller to expedite the selection of such houses and the possibility of passing orders under appropriate rules is being considered and is being expedited so that orders in this connection will issue in the course of a few days.

Arrangements are also being made to ensure that shelter marshals are recruited from the volunteer personnel. It is hoped that this personnel, if selected through the efforts of the A.R.P. and the assistance of the sub-area committees, will be extremely useful. Arrangements have been made by the Corporation at the instance of the Government, to increase the number of sweepers to clean the slit trenches.

Mr. J. C. GUPTA: What about the vagrants?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: My friend reminds me about the question of vagrants. That is certainly a pertinent question. In this connection I may say that many of these shelters have become the habitation of beggars. The Corporation was somewhat afraid that efforts to seize them from these shelters will be met with resistance and the Commissioner of Police has been addressed on the subject so that necessary assistance may be accorded to the Corporation in the matter of clearing these shelters of beggars.

Then, Sir, the question of keeping up the morale in the bustee areas has been stressed by Sir Henry Birkmyre. I may inform him that already it has been emphasised that greater attention should be paid to the bustee sarders in connection with the building up of morale in the bustees and the sarder should be given the position of a warden without being a member of the A.R.P. organisation. This, in fact, is the position today. Where it is not working properly it may be presumed that the warden is not doing his job. It has been mentioned that bustee people will take shelter in houses in groups arranged by the bustee sarders or group leaders, and sarders are encouraged to bring to the notice of the warden the requirements of the bustee areas. The sarder, in fact, corresponds to the volunteer warden as has been referred to by my friend, Sir Henry Birkmyre. So far as the control is concerned there has been no demand that the sarder should be any more formally recognised than what he has been at present. If there is such a demand by bustee people and if this turns out to be very real we will have no hesitation in accepting the suggestion made by Sir Henry Birkmyre. I hope these observations will satisfy my friend.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, my esteemed friend, Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, concluded his remarks by saying that so long as that particular individual, namely, Mr. Fazlul Huq is alive, there will be no peace in Bengal and hardly any prospect of a stable and useful

Government. Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy was in a communicative mood this morning because he is apparently in high spirits that the dissolution of this Cabinet is at hand and that he will soon have an opportunity once again of having command of the Commerce portfolio. Sir, I do not know if the House is aware that Mr. Suhrawardy is a very near and dear kinsman of mine, but throughout his life his hostility to me has been definitely of a personal character.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I again, Sir, intrude before Mr. Fazlul Huq makes any personal attack against me? Every time when statements have been made regarding his political conduct Mr. Fazlul Huq has replied by personal attacks and personal insinuations.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow that.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Thank you, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: You, Sir, allowed that pious wish of his that I should disappear from the field of politics altogether. I may tell you, Sir, without going into details that his hostility to me has been traditional and hereditary. He has never missed an opportunity of doing me the greatest possible injury, and he has delivered a speech today which is full of venom of a personal character, and not as a public man or as a leader of a community or of a party. Sir, I would appeal to those who will go to the same lobby with him today if they really and sincerely believe that my personal presence in the Cabinet or the fact that I am still alive can ever be taken to be an obstacle to peace, good government and prosperity of Bengal. If not, Sir, I would ask them most respectfully to dissociate themselves from the observations which have been made by Mr. Suhrawardy.

Sir, as regards the main question, my friend Mr. Banerjee has replied at great length and he has shown that whatever may be the present condition of affairs, however unsatisfactorily the department of Civil Supplies may have been functioning in Bengal, it is hardly justifiable and fair to throw the blame on the Ministry for what has been done or for what has not been done, for what has occurred due to circumstances over which the Ministry had no control. Sir, it is obvious that at a time like this and when we were faced with an almost imminent enemy invasion we felt that it would not be proper for the Ministers who had little practical knowledge and experience of business to interfere with what the Directorate of Civil Supplies had been doing or to thrust their own opinion in modification or amendment of the policy that was laid down by the Directorate. The Directorate was headed by one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service and whatever his faults or shortcomings may be, throughout his life he has had the reputation of being a very resourceful, energetic and a model public servant. His devotion to duty was well known and we all thought that when his name was suggested for the post of the Director of Civil Supplies, the matter would be in safe hands. Mr. Pinnell had before him the example of what they had done about food control in

England and as far as we are aware he tried to follow the method that had been adopted in the United Kingdom with such modifications as were necessary in the peculiar circumstances of India.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who told you that Mr. Pinnell followed the method of the United Kingdom?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That was my information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Did you get the information from Mr. Pinnell or from the Governor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I got it from Mr. Pinnell.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is all wrong.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May be wrong, but that was the information I got.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He learnt about food control in Britain much later. Three months after he saw that his scheme was a failure and that he could not handle the matter any longer he read the book.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it is not for me to defend Mr. Pinnell.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But you are defending him. Why should you defend him?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not defending him. He was the man who might have been trusted. He came with a good record and I do not defend what he has done, but I am defending the officer. I say he came with a good record and therefore we decided that he would be able to do something to meet the exigencies of the situation.

Now, Sir, we had associated with Mr. Pinnell, Indian members of the Civil Service who had reputation as successful public servants. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: They were never trusted.) We thought that the policy they had formulated would be the best policy in the circumstances on each particular occasion. If it is found that the policy they had undertaken had failed, I submit most respectfully that the Ministers cannot be blamed at the present moment for that failure for which they did never or could never know the consequence when the policy was first embarked upon.

Now, Sir, apart from the question of policy, it is true that at the present moment the situation is very acute and it is easy to formulate a charge against the Ministry by harping upon a thing which is at the present moment disturbing the attention and mind of Indian and non-Indian alike, of all sections of the community. It is easy to draw conclusions in condemnation of the Ministry for all that has happened during the past few months.

Now, Sir, I do not for a moment seek to minimise the seriousness of the situation. If there has been a failure and if the House think that the failure was due to what the Ministry has done, it is not for me to dictate to the House what opinion they should hold, but so far as I am concerned,

I may say and I say it with a great sense of responsibility that I have never been anxious to cling to office. (Laughter from Muslim League benches.) Just listen and you will find that there is no room for merriment on this point. I have never been anxious for office and during the last few months I have told His Excellency the Governor to take steps to constitute a National Government in Bengal composed of representatives of all sections of the House. Even day before yesterday I spoke to my friend the Leader of the European Group to use his influence with all sections of the House to form a National Government. Sir, I may tell the House that even yesterday I told His Excellency—I have written to him—that nothing is nearest my heart than to see a complete Government established in Bengal, and I have gone so far as to say that if at any moment it is found that I am a hindrance to the formation of a complete Government I will resign the very moment I am asked to do in order that such a Government may be formed. It is for His Excellency to decide in consultation with the leaders of all the groups what is the form of Government that is exactly suited to the needs and requirements of the province. I have had six most strenuous years of my life. I have never wished and I do not for a moment wish to cling to office if I find that I have forfeited the confidence of the members of this House or of my countrymen. It is for His Excellency to call upon my resignation and it will be placed in his hands the moment he asks for it. I say this with a full sense of my responsibility that I agree entirely with Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy that the present state of things should not be allowed to continue. It is not a satisfactory state of things. At a time when the situation is so serious, when everything is passing to a crisis, it is not the proper method to govern by having a sort of party system of Government and bickerings and charges and counter-charges on the floor of the House.

This is the time, Sir, when the best talents of the country should be harnessed to the common cause of the country. The best talents should sit together, irrespective of party, irrespective of all other affiliations and apply their minds to find out what is the best remedy for the present state of affairs in the country. So far as that is concerned, as I have said, Sir, I am not saying this only now, but I have been saying this for months and months together that if at any time I am a hindrance I am prepared to walk out. I do not want to be a hindrance for a single moment for the formation of a complete Cabinet in Bengal. If it means the consummation of the wish of Mr. Suhrawardy that I should be blotted completely out of existence, I am prepared to face my fate. I do not want to be anywhere where I am not wanted. If I have failed I take my failure with good grace. I want to say one last word. Wherever I am—in office or not—my services will always be at the disposal of my countrymen in any way that I may be called upon to do so. If there is a complete national Government, I will accept it most willingly, most gladly and most delightfully and give it the best possible assistance in my power.

My friend Mr. Suhrawardy made a remark about which I thought I should say something in reply. He said that we never asked for the co-operation of the public in tackling the various problems with which we were faced.

Many a time we contemplated setting up committees and I may remind Mr. Suhrawardy that we wanted to have his co-operation, but for reasons best known to himself he did not condescend to give us the benefit of his advice and assistance. The question of food supply, the question of necessaries of life can never be a party question. It is a question of such a vital importance that it should always go beyond and surmount all party or sectional considerations. From that point of view it is essentially necessary that there should be a non-party Cabinet in power.

As regards the cut motions generally I have already submitted that although things are unsatisfactory and although it may be that the Ministry should have interfered or at least intervened and that it was their negligence to a certain extent which has brought about the present state of things, nothing would be gained by merely recording a vote of censure. I submit, Sir, that we are here to accept praise or blame. We have never for a moment assumed to ourselves infallibility. What we have done is that we have tried to do our best under most difficult circumstances. If there are others who can do better, it is for the party leaders to consider what they should do and for His Excellency to accept their advice. For myself, as I have said, I shall be ready and willing to co-operate and bring into operation any scheme for meeting the situation with which we are faced. I do not think I should discuss one or two cut motions which concern my department. It is very late and members are anxious to go to the lobbies. I have got nothing more to say. (Applause from the Progressive Coalition Party benches.)

The motion of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Sir, in view of the explanation given by the Hon'ble Minister in charge, I ask leave of the House to withdraw my motion. (Applause from the Progressive Coalition Party.)

The motion of Sir Henry Birkmyre that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I put the next motion, I should like to remind the honourable members that there should be no crowding and no canvassing.

The motion of Mr. K. A. Hamilton that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division called with the following results:

AYES—99.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali).
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rashid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.

Abidur Reza Choudhury, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Masud Kazi.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Barma, Babu Premhari.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhut Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Mymensingh).
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi.
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib.
Hamilton, Mr. K. A.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hodge, Mr. H. R.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E.
Jalaluddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi (Tippera).
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Jogendra Nath.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur.
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mullick, Mr. Pulin Behary.
Musharruff Hossain, Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Nazimuddin, Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Norton, Mr. M. R.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Sahebe-Alam, Mr. Syed.
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Smyth Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, Mr. H. S.
Tamizuddin Khan, Mr.
Thorman, Mr. C. M.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.
Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi.

NOES—100.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna).
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Banerji, Mr. P.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prasad.
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Das, Mr. Monmohan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmad, Mr.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh.

Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. (Bogra).
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukherji, Dr. H. C.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Raikut, Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Roy, Shib Shekhareswar, Kumar.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath.
Sen-Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Shamsul Huda, Maulana.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.
Yousuf Mirza.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 97 and the Noes 109, the motion was lost.

The motion of Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherjee that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Nawabzada K. Nasarullah that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division called.

(When the division bell was ringing, the following interpellation took place.)

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: May I just draw your attention to the point that according to our calculation the votes recorded by us should be 99 and not 97 as announced by you, Sir. There might be some mistake and I hope you will kindly ask the Secretary to go through the list again and, if possible, announce the correct result the next day.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have asked the Secretary to check the list carefully, and if there is any discrepancy it will be announced not next day but just after the voting on the present motion.

The House then divided, with the following result:—

AYES—12.

Banerji, Mr. P.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath.
Sen-Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.

NOES—93.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna).
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoza, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Das, Mr. Monmohan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. (Bogra).
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukherji, Dr. H. C.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Kshirod Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Shamsul Huda, Maulana.
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan.
Wahur Rahman, Maulvi.
Yousuf Mirza.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

The Ayes being 12 and the Noes 93, the motion was lost.

The motion of Mr. Harendra Kumar Sur that the demand of Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Khan Bahadur A. F. M. Abdur Rahman that the demand Rs. 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary ırges in India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the demand of 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the demand of 1,58,29,000 for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordinary charges India" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu that a sum of 1,58,29,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "63—Extraordi-y charges in India" was then put and agreed to.

Miscounting of division results.

Mr. SPEAKER: It appears that in counting the votes on the cut motion 13 moved by Mr. Hamilton there was a mistake. The Ayes were declared ɔe 97 and the Noes 109, but on further scrutiny it appears that the Ayes e 99 and the Noes 109. The result therefore remains the same. The Noes e it. (This was greeted with table thumpings from the Muslim League ches.)

Hours of sitting on the 29th March, 1943.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Before you adjourn today's proceedings, y we know when we are sitting on Monday to debate on Jails? We re-re at least 1½ hours for discussion on that subject. I may also draw your ɔntion to the fact that Monday is the last day for budget cut motions. ɔ afternoon session will, therefore, automatically close at 6 p.m. The ɔrnoon session may therefore commence at 3 p.m. at least, if not earlier. · submission is that the morning session be held at 9 o'clock to enable House to have at least 1½ hours for discussion on Jails.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as the time for the afternoon sitting is concerned, t will be announced in the morning after the sitting in the morning. ; as regards the sitting in the morning, there has been a lot of exchange ;iews between the Whips and prominent members of the different parties. ıppears that they could not come to any agreement. A suggestion was le by some that it should be 9 a.m., but the Hon'ble Chief Minister stated t it would be very inconvenient for him if 9 a.m. was fixed. insisted that the time should be 10 a.m. as originally fixed. If we stick 10 a.m. there may be some difficulty. Therefore I suggest a *via media*: us sit at 9-30 a.m. on Monday. So far as the questions are concerned, ɔrding to the rules we cannot do without questions; we must have some stions. Therefore, I have asked my Secretary to see that there may not too many questions.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 1-50 p.m. till 9-30 a.m. on Monday.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 29th March, 1943, at 9-40 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair and 187 members.

Resignation of the Chief Minister.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, before you begin the proceedings of the day, may I with your permission ask a question to the Chief Minister? The city is full of rumours of his resignation. May I, Sir, enquire whether that is a fact, whether the Chief Minister has resigned; secondly, if so, what are the circumstances under which he has been forced to resign; and thirdly, Sir, if his resignation means the resignation of the entire Cabinet?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I would have been reluctant to say anything, but a pointed question has been put to me by the Leader of the Congress Party. I feel that I owe it to the House, when a question like this is put, to take the House into confidence and to state the facts. Sir, it is true that last night I was sent for by the Governor and I was with him from about 7-30 to over 9 p.m. A long discussion took place about the formation of a national Cabinet and various proposals were put forward, some of which I could not accept consistent with self-respect. His Excellency the Governor suggested to me that I should formally tender my resignation. I said I could not do so unless I had time to consult my party and my colleagues. To this, the Governor did not agree and I had to sign a letter of resignation. I do not wish to disclose any further details just now but shall make a further statement before the House on my return from Delhi where I am proceeding tomorrow night. The letter of resignation which I was made to submit has been accepted by His Excellency and the letter of acceptance reached me last night at about 10 p.m. In spite of all that has happened, I maintain and I am confident that I still enjoy the confidence of the majority in this House. Therefore, my answer is that I have tendered my resignation and that resignation has been accepted. As regards the circumstances, I have made a brief statement and I would defer making a detailed statement.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: What is the position of the Cabinet in view of his reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a constitutional question. Whether the other Ministers should go out and formally tender their resignation it is not for me to say. So far as I am concerned, I have tendered resignation and that resignation has been accepted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the letter of resignation was kept typed and ready at Government House for his signature and that he was also asked to choose between signing that letter and his being dismissed?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If my friend Dr. Sanyal puts that question to me as a member of this House and claims the privilege of the House to have that statement from me I have to make a statement. If he insists I will do that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I do insist.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is true that the letter of resignation was ready typed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: At your suggestion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, would you kindly enlighten me? In the circumstances we feel that the House would be unanimous in demanding the recall of the Governor Sir John Herbert. Will you kindly let us know the procedure for that?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Let us finish today's business first. I do not mean the business on the agenda. Let us see what we can do now. Whether there can be any recall of the Governor or not, that is a separate matter. You may consider it on a subsequent occasion.

Mr. Fazlul Huq, may I know from you what was the nature of your responsibility—joint or several, or joint and several?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Joint and several. I am referring constitutionally. The Cabinet ought to be *functus officio* with my resignation. I am not sure at this moment whether formal letters of resignation have been tendered by the other Ministers, but so far as I am concerned, the matter is finished.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of this statement, we feel that the House can no longer proceed with the budget discussion and, Sir, we want first of all a vote of confidence to be moved in the Chief Minister Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq (Cries of "Hear! Hear!" from the Progressive Coalition Party benches.) and his Cabinet colleagues. Therefore, Sir, I give you due notice thereof just now immediately after the statement and we request you to postpone further discussion of the budget until disposal of that vote of confidence motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As regards the budget, cannot any other Minister move it?

(Cries of "No, no.")

Mr. SPEAKER: In view of the statement made by Mr. Fazlul Huq that he tendered resignation of his office as Chief Minister and that that resignation has been accepted and in view of the further fact that the responsibility of the Ministry was joint and several the Ministry, in my opinion, has ceased to exist. (Cries of "Hear! Hear!") and consequently no business whatsoever can be transacted unless a new Ministry is formed.

The House stands adjourned till 3-45 p.m. on Monday fortnight.

Adjournment.

The House was accordingly adjourned at 9-50 a.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Monday, the 12th April, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

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(Official Report.)

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